THE

# ROMAN HISTORY,

IN A

## SERIES OF LETTERS,

FROM A

## NOBLEMAN TO HIS SON.

Omnis homines, qui ſeſe ſtudent præſtare cæteris animalibus, ſumma ope niti decet, ne vitam ſilentio tranſeant, veluti pecora, quæ natura prona, atque ventri obedientia finxit. SALLUST.

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# THE ROMAN HISTORY, IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

## LETTER XXXVI.

THE ſucceſs of Pompey crowned him with laurels, and raiſed him to the higheſt pitch of military honour, but at the ſame time it procured him enemies.

Tarquin Cataline, a man of noble birth, but diſſolute manners, reſolved to aggrandize himſelf at the expence of the public, while Pompey was abroad in queſt of glory. He had ſo much duplicity in the whole of his conduct, that he could ſuit himſelf to perſons of moſt oppoſite paſſions, and even acquire their eſteem. Being in very neceſſitous circumſtances, he propoſed himſelf a candidate for the conſulſhip, with no other view but that of repairing his broken fortune, but failing in his attempt, he joined himſelf to Piſo, and ſome other deſperate men, who had formed themſelves into a body with

a reſolution to murder the conſuls, and poſſeſs themſelves of their power. Their deſigns, however, were fruſtrated before they became ripe for action, which enraged Cataline ſo much, that he reſolved, by the aſſiſtance of a few wretches, to raiſe a general inſurrection in Italy, and ſet fire to the city of Rome. In the mean time, two of the conſpirators were ſent to murder the great Cicero, who was the moſt inveterate enemy of Cataline, but he had notice of their intentions almoſt as ſoon as they had projected the ſcheme, ſo that he not only took proper meaſures to ſave his own life, but alſo to provide for the peace of the city. In the mean time, Cataline, with the moſt conſummate impudence, went to the ſenate, and declared his innocence in ſo formidable and ſpecious a manner, that ſome of the patricians began to look upon the whole as a falſe accuſation preferred againſt him by his enemies.

Cicero, who had hitherto heard him with patience, could no longer conceal his reſentment, but ſtanding up, in the moſt eloquent manner, laid open the whole nature of the conſpiracy. Cataline attempted to make a reply to what Cicero had advanced, but having made uſe of ſome illiberal reflections on that celebrated orator, the reſt of the auditory refuſed to hear him. Upon that the conſpirator declared, that ſince they would not hear him, he would involve the whole city in ruin. He then left the ſenate, and returned to his own houſe, where he was met by Lentulus and Cethegus, two of his friends, and it was agreed, that they ſhould leave Rome that night, and retire to Etruria, where Manilius, another of the conſpirators, had promiſed to meet them with a very formidable army; for, like all thoſe who are conſcious of guilt, they knew

knew that nothing could ſcreen them from juſtice, unleſs their ſcheme was put in execution.

The eloquence of Cicero, in the mean time, induced the people to exert themſelves in ſecuring all thoſe whom they ſuſpected of treaſonable practices, and among the reſt, they laid hold of Cæſius, Lentulus, and Cethuges, who were immediately confined in priſon. Witneſſes were produced againſt them from among the Allobogres, natives of that country, now called Savoy, and they ſhewed the ſenate the letters of Lentulus, wherein he had perſuaded them to take up arms againſt the Roman ſtate.

Great debates aroſe in the ſenate, concerning the manner in which the conſpirators ſhould be puniſhed, and the majority were of opinion, that they ſhould be inſtantly put to death; but when it came to the turn of Julius Cæſar to deliver his ſentiments, he repeated to the ſenate, that it would be a dangerous precedent to put them to death, becauſe the ſame cruelties might be inflicted on the adverſe party under any change that might happen to take place in the government. His opinion was, that they ought to be condemned to perpetual impriſonment, in order to ſpend the remainder of their days in wretchedneſs, while their conſciences would be tormented with the remembrance of their crimes. This motion, made by Cæſar, was ſtrongly oppoſed by Portius Cato, a man of the moſt rigid diſpoſition, and on many occaſions ſeemingly deſtitute of bowels of compaſſion. He inſiſted that the priſoners had been guilty of a capital offence, and wondered how any perſon ſhould propoſe a mitigation of their puniſhment, eſpecially as ſuch lenient meaſures would induce Cataline to go on with vigour in his deſign of deſtroying the city, and eſtabliſhing ar-

bitrary power. Cicero, in a moſt eloquent oration, ſeconded the motion made by Cato, and a majority being brought over to conſent to the execution of the criminals, they were that night ſtrangled in priſon.

Cataline having received information that his accomplices were put to death, attempted to eſcape into Gaul, but he was intercepted in his march by Petreius, lieutenant to Antonius the conſul, and a moſt bloody battle enſued, in which Cataline was ſlain, and his whole army cut off. When the news of this victory was brought to Rome, Cicero was diſtinguiſhed with the higheſt honours, and Cato moved, that he ſhould be called the father of his country. Such was the ſtate of affairs in Rome, when Pompey returned from the eaſt, loaded with the ſpoils and honours already mentioned, ſo that it is eaſily to be conceived, that Rome, though freed from a dangerous conſpiracy, would not be long without an abſolute maſter.

Pompey was ſenſible of the ſtate of his country, and as his ambition was equal to his valour, ſo he reſolved to avail himſelf of the public diſcontents that then took place among the people. He made a bold attempt to ſet aſide the freedom of election, by propoſing two of his own creatures to be conſuls, but he found himſelf diſappointed, and therefore he reſolved to take into his party ſuch of the patricians as he thought could be dazzled by the brightneſs of his ſplendour, and conſequently unable to penetrate into the depth of his ſchemes.

But while he was going on in this manner, and at the ſame time, rivalled by Craſſus, who oppoſed riches to generoſity, a third perſon ſtood up to combat the prize with them, who had long been growing into eſteem among his fellow citizens.

This

This was Julius Cæſar, nephew in the female line to the great Marius, and who had lately returned from Spain, where he had diſtinguiſhed himſelf as a moſt able commander. He had already made himſelf extremely popular, and had paſſed through all the inferior offices with a reputation ſo untainted, that he ſeemed to reign in the hearts of the people as an object of veneration. He aſpired at the conſulſhip, and at the ſame time, his love of glory induced him to wiſh for a triumph, although he knew that both could not take place at the ſame time, for he muſt have been honoured with the triumph before he came into the city, and he could not obtain the conſulſhip till he came into the ſenate.

Cæſar had abilities far ſuperior to many of thoſe heroes who gain laurels in the field of battle, and therefore, without regarding the ſhadow of an empty name, he reſolved to bring over the moſt powerful of the patricians to his party. Pompey, to whom he firſt made his addreſs, was fond of the aſſiſtance of one who had acquired honours that began to ſhine as conſpicuous as his own, and at the ſame time, Craſſus was brought into their meaſures.

Theſe three having agreed, that no act ſhould paſs into a law, nor any thing be decided in the ſenate without their approbation, the people once more became ſlaves, or rather their ſlavery was continued under another name, which, at that time, was called the firſt triumvirate.

A confederacy of ſuch a nature could not ſubſiſt long without interruption, for it is natural to ſuppoſe, that each of the parties were equally ambitious. The people were fond of liberty even to licentiouſneſs; the ſenate, ſupported by the whole body of the patricians, could not bear the thoughts

of being obliged to ſubmit to a ſuperior power from whom they were to receive laws; ſo that Rome was like a body with three heads, nor did they know to whom they were, conſiſtent with the laws, to pay ſpecial obedience. So precarious is the ſtate of human affairs, and ſo dangerous is it for the people to ſplit into parties.

The ſenate, whoſe power was now reduced to little more than a ſhadow, yet had ſome notions of their original importance, and therefore, when Cæſar propoſed himſelf a candidate for the conſulſhip, they contrived to join in office with him one Bibulus, whom they thought qualified to check his ambitious views, but they were deceived, for Cæſar's popularity bore down all oppoſition. With his mind ſtill fixed on univerſal empire, he propoſed that ſome lands in the Campania ſhould be divided among ſuch of the poor citizens as had three children, at which the ſenate complained, but this only ſerved to make him more popular than ever.

The people roſe in a tumultuous manner, and obliged the ſenators to take an oath that the Licinian law ſhould be continued, while Craſſus and Pompey were induced to join with their colleague in office; though he only made them dupes of his intrigues. He gave Pompey his daughter Julia in marriage, ſo that he was ſure of his friendſhip, which, in a natural ſenſe, is ſuperior to all other conſiderations. It was then agreed to divide the empire among them, which was done in the following manner. Syria, and all the other Aſiatic territories, were conſigned to Craſſus by his own deſire, becauſe he hoped thereby to increaſe his riches.

Pompey was to govern Spain and all the provinces depending on it, to which he was the more inclined,

inclined, becauſe there were no wars at that time in the place, and as he had been long fatigued in the ſervice of his country, he reſolved to ſpend ſome time at Rome, and commit the management of all public affairs to his lieutenant. Gaul, the moſt important and the moſt valuable of all the provinces, was given to Cæſar, and, at the ſame time, it was enacted by the ſenate, that he ſhould remain there five years, in order to ſubdue ſome of thoſe ferocious people who refuſed to ſubmit to the Roman yoke.

In the mean time, Cicero, who had ever been attentive to the liberties of his fellow citizens, and jealous of thoſe who ſeemed to engroſs too large a ſhare of power, left nothing undone to croſs and thwart all the ſchemes projected by Cæſar. On the other hand, Cæſar procured Publius Clodius, a man of diſſolute morals, to oppoſe Cicero, becauſe he was afraid of the force of his eloquence in his abſence, and likewiſe, becauſe Clodius had given his opinion againſt Cicero in the condemnation of the criminals concerned in the Cataline conſpiracy, ſo that they were the moſt inveterate enemies to each other.

Cicero, finding that a ſtorm was ready to burſt out upon him, applied to Cæſar to take him as his lieutenant to Gaul, but his propoſal was evaded by the moſt frivolous pretences, and the celebrated orator was accuſed by Clodius of having condemned Roman citizens without giving them leave to make a public defence. In conſequence thereof, notwithſtanding all he had done to ſerve his country, he was baniſhed from Italy; his eſtates were confiſcated, and his houſes demoliſhed. Cato was ſent to the iſland of Cyprus, under a pretence that the government of it would be a high honour to him, but in reality, it was nothing leſs than a ſcheme propoſed by Cæſar, in order to accompliſh his favourite pur-

poſe, namely, that of ſetting himſelf up above the ſenate, to reign with an abſolute authority over the Roman people. While things continued in this ſtate, Cæſar ſet out for Gaul, where he remained eight years, and conqueſt crowned all his undertakings; for, beſides many barbarous nations whom he ſubdued, he made two expeditions into Britain, and made the inhabitants acknowledge his authority, and promiſe to pay tribute to the Romans. Indeed, his conqueſts in Britain were but of a partial nature, but, as he was the firſt who had ever penetrated into this iſland in a hoſtile manner, ſo he has been extolled in all ſucceeding ages.

Cæſar, in all his conqueſts, diſtinguiſhed himſelf by ſo much clemency, that he even gained the affections of thoſe whom he conquered; and Pompey, who ſtill remained in Rome, did all he could to promote his intereſt, becauſe he did not know what was the object of his ambition. Craſſus and Pompey ſent notice to Cæſar, that they would meet him, in order to conſider of the moſt proper methods to be uſed to preſerve the power they were in poſſeſſion of, but the ſenate remained inflexible; ſo that after ſeveral ſtruggles between ſlavery and liberty, things continued juſt as they were before. In the mean time, Julia, the daughter of Cæſar, and wife of Pompey, died, ſo that the connections ariſing from motives of conſanguinity, ſeemed to be at an end; becauſe Pompey reſolved to form meaſures altogether different from thoſe he had previouſly engaged in.

Indeed, the avarice of Craſſus gave a new turn to the ſtate of affairs in Italy; for he, having engaged in a battle with the Parthians, without being properly acquainted with military diſcipline, ſaw all his forces cut off, and at laſt died in battle, not ſo much a great hero as one who had

engaged

engaged in a romantic undertaking, without conſidering the conſequences that might flow from an action, where both parties were eager in the purſuit of glory.

Craſſus being thus taken away, his two remaining aſſociates had nothing left, but that of contending which ſhould be greateſt, there being no perſon in the commonwealth endowed with abilities ſufficient to oppoſe them, ſo that Rome was conſidered as a prize which muſt be the property either of the one or the other.

Pompey now found that Cæſar was the darling of the people, an appellation to which he had been juſtly entitled, in conſequence of his condeſcending manner of conducting himſelf, even to his moſt inveterate enemies. The ſoldiers were attached to him from motives of real benevolence, becauſe he paid the debts they had contracted out of the ſpoils he had taken from thoſe nations whoſe puſillanimity obliged them then to ſubmit to the warlike conqueror.

At this time, Clodius, the favourite of ſuch of the people as were in an oppoſite intereſt, was killed by Millo, in one of the roads leading to the city, upon which a tumult enſued, and, the dead body being brought to the ſenate, the populace were ſo enraged, that they ſet fire to Millo's houſe, and the corpſe was conſumed along with it. Confuſion took place in every part of the city, and nothing was to be ſeen but deſtruction and carnage from one end to the other.

The people who wiſhed well to the intereſts of their fellow-citizens, wiſhed for a more regular form of government, and as Pompey was, at that time, extremely popular, it was propoſed that he ſhould be appointed dictator. But Cato oppoſed this motion, becauſe he thought it would be giving too

much power to one man, and therefore inſiſted that he ſhould be made ſole conſul for one year, for this reaſon, that at the expiration of that time he would be obliged to give an account to the ſenate and the people in what manner he had diſcharged the duties of his office.

This reſolution was agreed to, and Cato, by his influence in the ſenate, procured an act, that a body of forces ſhould be aſſigned to Pompey, in order to ſupport his dignity, while Millo, who had murdered Clodius, was condemned to perpetual baniſhment.

On the other hand, Cicero ſaid all that an eloquent orator could expreſs, in order to defend his friend Clodius, but all in vain, for the people crowded into the forum, and the expreſſive words of the orator were loſt in the clamour of the multitude. Pompey had married the daughter of Metellus, a young lady of great beauty and merit, and, in conſequence of family connections, he thought that there might ſtill be a poſſibility of eſtabliſhing his power.

## LETTER XXXVII.

POMPEY took notice to the ſenate, that Cæſar ought not to be elected to the conſulſhip, unleſs he appeared in perſon at Rome, and he brought over a great majority to ſecond his motion. But Cæſar, who knew that he had the army on his ſide, reſolved to act on principles diametrically oppoſite. He reſolved to remain in Gaul, till things were ripe for execution, for he had not the leaſt doubt but he would be able to place himſelf at the head of the republic, and ſo eſtabliſh a deſpotic power.

The

The ſenate, in order to weaken the power that jealouſy induced them to imagine Cæſar had aſſumed, ſent an order to him for two of the legions that compoſed his army to march againſt the Parthians, which was only a feint to cover their real deſign; but Cæſar was as cunning as them. He knew that things were not yet ripe for execution, and therefore he ſent the legions, in order to conceal his real intentions, for he had not the leaſt doubt of accompliſhing his favourite purpoſe.

The ſenate finding Cæſar ſo ready to comply with their demands, reſolved to proceed further, and it was propoſed by them that he ſhould be called home, becauſe they began to be jealous of his power, eſpecially as the army was attached to him from motives of affection rather than intereſt.

Previous to this reſolution of the ſenate, Cæſar, like an able politician, had brought over ſome of the moſt reſpectable of the citizens to his intereſt, among whom was Curio, one of the tribunes of the people, a man endowed with that ſpecies of eloquence which is calculated to rouſe and inflame.

This man, in a public ſpeech that he made in the ſenate, inſiſted that Cæſar ſhould lay down his office of commander in Gaul, but at the ſame time he propoſed that Pompey ſhould ſet him the example, for both had been longer in power than was conſiſtent with the ſafety of the ſtate. Pompey, who had been deceived by falſe repreſentations, was eaſily led into the ſnare, and ſeemed willing to reſign; but Curio having diſmiſſed the ſenate in virtue of his office, Marcellus, who was attached to Pompey from motives of friendſhip, convoked it again, and it was agreed that Cæſar ſhould be recalled while Pompey was to continue ſtill in office. A majority, however,

of

of the ſenate over-ruled the motion made by Marcellus, and before they had time to come to any deliberation in an unanimous manner, news were brought them that Cæſar had croſſed the Alps, and was marching at the head of the army towards Rome.

Cæſar had ſo many friends in Rome, that news were ſent as ſoon as any thing tranſpired wherein he might be ſuppoſed to have the leaſt concern, and therefore he ſent notice to the ſenate, that he was willing to lay down his employment, as ſoon as Pompey did his; but all his propoſals were rejected with contempt by men who had nothing to boaſt of as merit, but their own ſelf-ſufficiency.

Cæſar, finding that he had no reaſon to expect any favour from the ſenate, marched his troops over the Alps to Ravenna, from whence he ſent a letter to the conſuls, offering to give up all his offices, upon condition that Pompey did the ſame; adding, that if his propoſal was not immediately complied with, he would appear as an enemy before the gates of Rome, in order to do juſtice to his countrymen, who had long laboured under oppreſſion from thoſe, whoſe duty it was to have governed them with equity.

The manner in which Cæſar wrote his letter to the conſuls gave ſuch umbrage to the ſenate, that a decree paſſed, enjoining him to give up all his commiſſions, or, in caſe of refuſal, to be declared an enemy to the commonwealth, and that it ſhould be lawful for any man to kill him wherever he was found.

The city of Rome was now filled with contention from the one end to the other, and ſeveral of thoſe who had been moſt active in oppoſing Cæſar, began to think themſelves in danger, and therefore

Curio,

Curio, with Marcus Antonius and Longinus, went to his camp and implored his protection.

Cæsar, who was no stranger to the feelings that naturally arise in the human heart, produced Curio and the others before the soldiers, in the humiliating dress in which they made their appearance, and spoke with such forceable eloquence upon the cruelty of the senate, that the whole army begged he would lead them to Rome, in order to revenge such flagrant injuries.

Finding the army thus ready to second all his motions, he went to supper in his tent with his friends, and after conversing in the most chearful manner on subjects of philosophy and other parts of literature, he went out under pretence of returning in a short time; but instead of doing so, he went to a detached part of the army, which he had sent as far as Rubicon, a small river that terminated the bounds of his government, and beyond which, not to pass without leave from the senate.

When he arrived at the place he found the greatest part of the army filled with the most superstitious notions; but Cæsar was too much of a politician to be intimidated by vulgar errors. He took notice, that death or glory was now before them, and, plunging himself headlong into the river, the soldiers followed his example, and resolved to conquer or die.

Rome at this time exhibited one universal scene of confusion; and Pompey, by whose influence Cæsar had been raised to grandeur, began to repent of his conduct when it was too late. Cato, the most popular man in the city, reproached him with having been too remiss in attending to the affairs of the republic, and all that Pompey could alledge was, that Cæsar had seduced him, and concealed

from him his private ſentiments. He ſaid he was ready to conduct any army they thought proper to raiſe againſt Cæſar; at the ſame time intimating, that their affairs were not in ſo deſperate a ſtate but that they might be retrieved, and peace reſtored to the commonwealth, if the people would ſtand by each other, and not ſuffer any perſon to wreſt from them thoſe privileges, which had been tranſmitted to them by their anceſtors.

Having thus, in ſome meaſure, encouraged the people to hope for ſucceſs, he put himſelf at the head of the two legions that Cæſar had ſent from Gaul, and marched to the city of Capua, where he reſolved to wait for Cæſar, although he knew that he had not force ſufficient to oppoſe him.

Cæſar, whoſe genius in war was equal to his unbounded liberality in times of peace, marched his army forward with the utmoſt rapidity, and the firſt place that oppoſed his progreſs was Corfinium, in which was a garriſon of ſoldiers under the command of Domitius, who had been appointed by the Roman ſenate to ſucceed Cæſar in his government. Domitius finding that he could not any longer protract the ſiege of the city, reſolved to make his eſcape, and in the mean time Lentulus, the conſul, came to Cæſar, and implored his pardon in the moſt abject terms. Cæſar would not ſuffer him to humble himſelf as a ſupplicant, but told him, that he might make himſelf entirely eaſy, as he did not come to Italy with any intention of enſlaving the people, but merely to reſtore peace to the commonwealth, and to redreſs the grievances of thoſe who had been injured by the illegal decrees of the ſenate, without the conſent of the people.

An anſwer to the ſoldiers, declared in ſuch a ſincere and compaſſionate manner, could not fail of gaining

gaining Cæſar many advantages, and therefore no ſooner was it communicated to thoſe that were in the city, than they reſolved to put themſelves under his protection. The ſoldiers were ſtill attached to Cæſar from motives of gratitude, and Pompey, conſcious thereof, retreated to Brunduſium, where he reſolved to ſtand the event of a ſiege. In the mean time Cæſar ſent a meſſenger to him, deſiring a farewell interview, but Pompey, who had been looked upon as the father of the city, returned for anſwer, that he could do nothing without the conſent of the conſuls, upon which Cæſar reſolved to proſecute the war, let the conſequence be ever ſo fatal. Pompey reſolved to embark his men on board ſuch boats as were then in the harbour, and tranſport them over to Dyrachium, by which he ſaved himſelf, though at the ſame time he left Italy expoſed to all the deſigns of the haughty conqueror.

Cæſar, who was well acquainted with the ſprings of action in the human heart, reſolved to march towards Rome, and enrich his ſoldiers out of thoſe treaſures that had been laid up as a ſacred depoſit for the ſecurity of the ſtate, and which Pompey had never pretended to meddle with.

When he arrived at Rome, the people received him with the utmoſt acclamations of joy, but when he approached the place where the treaſure was depoſited, he was oppoſed by Metellus, the tribune of the people, who told him, that no perſon whatever had a right to meddle with that money, becauſe it was ſet apart to ſupply future wars that might happen between them and the Gauls. Metellus called ſuperſtition to his aid, and told Cæſar that the gods had decreed deſtruction to the man who ſhould march towards it, but the hero, no way intimidated, forced open the doors of the ſacred repoſitory, and found

found no leſs than three thouſand pounds weight of gold, beſides ſilver and other valuable effects of an immenſe quantity.

With part of this money he rewarded thoſe brave ſoldiers who had ſerved under him both in Gaul and in Britain, and not doubting but he would be able to conciliate their affections to himſelf, he reſolved to leave Rome, and, if poſſible, ſubdue Pompey, as well as thoſe who acted under him in the character of lieutenants, both in Spain and in other parts.

Cæſar next prepared to ſet out for Spain, and, when he took leave of his friends, he ſaid, with his uſual good humour, I ſhall fight a gallant army without a general, but upon my return I muſt fight a general who will not have an army to command.

The army under the command of Cæſar was one of the moſt brave and hardy that had ever taken the field. They were compoſed of veterans who had expoſed themſelves to a thouſand dangers, and ſuffered an infinite number of hardſhips. Indeed, the hardſhips they had to ſuffer in croſſing the Alps are ſo amazing, that if the form of that country, even in this age, did not point out the probability of them, the whole might be looked upon as romantic. But generoſity on the part of Cæſar, and perſeverance in his men, who admired him as ſomething more than human, enabled them to conquer every difficulty. Leaving a detachment of his forces to beſiege Marſeilles, he continued his march to Spain, where he was oppoſed by Pompey's lieutenants, and at the ſame time found his army in want of proviſions. This induced him to make a great number of ſmall boats covered with leather, with which he croſſed a large river, and procured every thing he ſtood in need of.

It was not long before he gave his enemies a proof of his ſuperior knowledge in military affairs, for he made

made a feint as if he would have turned the courſe of the river, ſo that he had an opportunity of dividing his forces, and obtained a complete victory, ſurrounding the adherents of Pompey on every ſide.

Spain being now entirely in his poſſeſſion, he diſmiſſed the priſoners in the moſt generous manner, and then returning to Marſeilles, forced that city to ſurrender to his victorious arms. Clemency, his favourite virtue, induced him to pardon all thoſe who had oppoſed him, and leaving a proper governor in the place, he ſet out for Rome, where he was received with demonſtrations of joy.

In the mean time, Pompey, who had croſſed over to Greece, was active in making every neceſſary preparation to oppoſe Cæſar, to which he was ſtrongly induced by Cato and Cicero, who had both joined his army. Anthony, who commanded for Cæſar, had been defeated, but nothing could damp the ſpirit of Cæſar, who having put his army under proper regulations, prepared to ſet out for Greece, and meet his opponent before he had an opportunity of returning to Italy. It is true, he had many difficulties to encounter, for it was now the depth of winter, and beſi es the want of a ſufficient number of ſhips, he found moſt of the Italian party blocked up by Bibulus, a brave naval officer, who commanded under Pompey. All that Cæſar could do, was to combat five of his twelve legions, which in the whole amounted to no more than twenty-ſix thouſand horſe and foot included, and theſe by good fortune landed at a place called Pharſalia. Having landed his forces, he ſent back the veſſels to bring over the remainder from Italy, but thirty of them falling into the hands of Bibulus, he ſet them all on fire, and every one on board periſhed.

Cæſar

Cæſar was as great a politician as a warrior, and therefore he ſent one Rufus, whom he had taken priſoner, to make propoſals of an accommodation to Pompey, offering at the ſame time that all their diſputes ſhould be referred to the ſenate; but Pompey knew that the Romans were too much attached to Cæſar to grant himſelf any favour, ſo that he rejected his offers. Pompey finding the critical ſtate he was in, left Macedonia, where he had been raiſing forces, and marched to Dyracchium, in order to prevent that city from falling into the hands of Cæſar, but when he arrived there he found that many of his troops had deſerted, for they had been collected from ſo many nations, that they had no real regard for the common cauſe.

At laſt both armies came in ſight of each other on the oppoſite banks of the river Apſus, but although the men were eager to come to a general engagement, yet both the commanders were too prudent to venture precipitately upon that which was to determine their future fortunes. Cæſar, who had waited with the utmoſt impatience for the arrival of the remainder of his army from Italy, diſguiſed himſelf in the habit of a peaſant, and employed a fiſherman to carry him over to Brandufium; but the ſtorm was ſo great, that they could not proceed, ſo that he was once more obliged to return to his camp, where he was received by the ſoldiers with every demonſtration of joy. Soon after his arrival, a meſſenger came to inform him, that Anthony and Calenus, his two lieutenants, were landed with the forces at Appolonia, upon which he made the proper diſpoſition to effect a junction. On the other hand, Pompey had done all in his power to prevent Cæſar's forces from joining, but his ſchemes were all diſconcerted by the vigilance of his opponent, and he

was

was obliged to ſeek refuge near Dyracchium, where he had an opportunity of procuring proviſions for his army from thoſe Grecian ſtates who were in alliance with him. Cæſar's forces were reduced to great want, but they had been ſo long inured to hardſhips, that nothing ſeemed too difficult for them.

Theſe diſtreſſes, however, only ſerved to point out an opportunity for Cæſar to make a further diſplay of thoſe military talents with which nature had liberally endowed him, and which had been improved both by art and experience.

Behind the place where Pompey was encamped, there were ſeveral hills and riſing grounds, which Cæſar took poſſeſſion of, by which the enemy were in a manner blocked up. Pompey was now in ſuch diſtreſs, by reaſon of all communication between him and the neighbouring county being cut off, that he reſolved to make one deſperate effort, and therefore he ſent ſome of his ſhips to attack ſuch forts as Cæſar had cauſed to be thrown up along the ſhore. This had the deſired effect, and Pompey having extricated himſelf out of his difficulties, encamped his men in an open plain near the ſea, where he had an opportunity of procuring proviſions.

Cæſar finding that if he remained any longer inactive, his men would become diſpirited, reſolved to come to a general engagement, and therefore attacked the advanced guard of Pompey's army, that lay encamped in a wood. At firſt Cæſar's army began to give way, while Pompey preſſed upon them with the utmoſt vigour, but Cæſar kept poſſeſſion of his entrenchments, ſo that Pompey, who was afraid of being led into an ambuſcade, drew off his men, and put all the priſoners he had taken to the ſword.

Cæſar,

Cæſar, though no ſtranger to his own abilities as a general, yet was not ignorant of the ſhining qualities that adorned Pompey, called his army together, and in the moſt inſinuating manner repreſented to them that they were ſtill more than a match for the enemy, and therefore propoſed marching towards Appolonia, which he effected, though cloſely purſued by ſome detachments from Pompey's army.

Scipio, one of Pompey's lieutenants, was then in Theſſally, and Domitius, who commanded a legion for Cæſar, was in Macedonia, and therefore both the generals endeavoured, if poſſible, to prevent theſe auxiliaries from being intercepted in joining their reſpective leaders. Cæſar marched with the utmoſt expedition to Gomphi, a town on the frontiers of Theſſally, garriſoned by a part of Pompey's army, which he took in a few hours, and gave all belonging to the inhabitants up to the ſoldiers. From thence he continued his march to Metropolis, which he alſo took, ſo that he was now maſter of all Theſſaly, except Lariſſa, where Scipio had fortified himſelf with the forces under his command, in the ſtrongeſt manner. Pompey, notwithſtanding his great prudence and calm deliberation before he ventured upon an engagement, yet found that it was in a manner impoſſible to keep his men any longer from coming to a general engagement. Accordingly he marched to Theſſally, and encamped his men in an open plain called Pharſalia, where he was joined by Scipio, his lieutenant, and ſuch forces as he had been able to raiſe for him.

Having proceeded ſo far, he reſolved to provoke Cæſar to a general engagement, who found it in a manner impoſſible to reſtrain the impetuoſity of his forces any longer. The army under the command of Pompey was the moſt numerous; but Cæſar's were

were more inured to hardſhips, and much more regularly inſtructed in the military art. Pompey had many brave officers under him to conduct the detached party of the army, but the ſoldiers who fought under Cæſar had nothing but his abilities to confide in. Cæſar perſuaded his men, that he had done every thing in his power to reſtore peace to the commonwealth, while Pompey on the other hand perſuaded his ſoldiers that his cauſe was the cauſe of the public. Thus both endeavoured to ſhelter themſelves under a pretence of having the public good only in view, while their ſole intentions were to eſtabliſh their own ſuperiority. Both, however, were ſtill afraid to venture out of their entrenchments, and yet in the moſt unexpected manner both ſtruck their tents at the ſame time. Cæſar ſaid all he could to encourage his men, telling them, that notwithſtanding ſuperiority of numbers, yet there was not the leaſt doubt but they would obtain a complete victory.

Pompey was not remiſs in encouraging his men, and becauſe he had a great number of cavalry, he doubted not but they would be able to out-flank thoſe under the command of Cæſar. Labienus, one of his lieutenants, ſeconded all his operations with the greateſt alacrity, and Pompey being almoſt aſſured of ſucceſs, led on his men to oppoſe his victorious rival. We need not be ſurpriſed to hear, that two ſuch accompliſhed generals would do every thing in their power to diſpoſe of their forces in a proper manner, eſpecially as the empire of the world depended upon the ſucceſs of the day. Accordingly Pompey divided his men into three departments. The centre, conſiſting of ſuch forces as had been raiſed in Syria, was committed to the direction of Scipio. Domitius Ænobardus commanded

manded the legions who had been brought from Spain, and were placed on the right, while Pompey on the left put himſelf at the head of all thoſe veterans who from motives of diſcontent had deſerted from Cæſar's army, or who had been diſmiſſed by him as perſons not proper to be truſted in matters of ſuch importance. In the ſame manner Cæſar divided his army with equal prudence; for Domitius Calvinus was placed in the centre, Mark Anthony on the left, and himſelf on the right, that he might have the glory of dying, or ſubduing his rival Pompey.

## LETTER XXXVIII.

HAVING thus attended to the diſpoſitions made by two ſuch celebrated commanders, it's neceſſary that we ſhould be as particular as poſſible in relating an event that made Cæſar, emperor of Rome, and in a manner opened the way for uniting all the contending parties.

Cæſar had raiſed and diſciplined the tenth legion while he was in Gaul, and that was the corps that had ſo nobly oppoſed the Britons. At their head he placed himſelf, and ſeeing that Pompey had ordered his horſe to march all to one ſide, he began to imagine what were his real intentions. Moſt of the horſemen in Pompey's army were young Roman noblemen, and Cæſar reſolved to avail himſelf of that circumſtance. He drew out ſix of the Cohorts, and concealed them behind the right wing, at the ſame time charging them not to throw their javelins as uſual, but to wait the arrival of the cavalry, and then ſtab the horſemen in the face. What few horſemen he had, he placed in ſuch a manner as to cover the tenth legion, for in that corps he placed the greateſt confidence;

confidence; and indeed under his command they had often done wonders.

The whole of the ſoldiers in both theſe formidable armies had grown old in military knowledge, ſo that it was natural to expect that they would perform wonders. Both the generals went from one line to another, each exhorting the men to exert themſelves in defence of thoſe privileges for which they had ſo often ſignalized themſelves. Pompey repreſented the neceſſity they were under to defend the conſuls, and reſtore liberty to Rome, while Cæſar, on the other hand, told his legions, that the fate of the day would decide whether Rome was to be domineered over by every petty tyrant, or whether it was not more neceſſary that peace ſhould be reſtored to all ranks of people.

Cæſar, at firſt, ordered his men to begin the charge, becauſe they were become impatient to engage; but as they approached to attack the firſt line of Pompey's army, they found them ſeemingly unwilling to engage. Both armies had the utmoſt opinion of each other's abilities, but at laſt thoſe under the command of Cæſar ruſhed forward among the enemy with their ſwords drawn, after they had thrown their javelins. The ſhock was ſuſtained with the greateſt bravery by Pompey's ſoldiers, and in the mean time Cæſar's army beginning to loſe ground, he ordered the ſix cohorts to advance, and ſtrike their javelins into the faces of the enemy's horſemen. This unuſual method of fighting put the cavalry into the utmoſt confuſion, for they ſeemed every one eager to ſave himſelf. Being thus put into confuſion, they fled, and left the foot, whom they ought to have ſupported, expoſed to Cæſar's men.

The cohorts purſued their advantage with unabating vigour, while Cæſar attacked Pompey's in flank, thereby thinking to put them into ſuch confuſion, that victory would be eaſily obtained. To complete his ſcheme, Cæſar brought up his reſerved lines, and they charged the enemy with ſuch impetuoſity, that the lines broke, and the ſoldiers fled to their camp. In this critical moment, Cæſar diſcovered one of thoſe ſhining qualities, by which every part of his life had been diſtinguiſhed. Sure of victory, he called out to his men to purſue the ſtrangers, but not to offer any injury to thoſe who were Romans. This had ſuch an effect on the adverſe party, that they immediately laid down their arms, and ſubmitted to what terms the conqueror thought proper to preſcribe.

In the mean time the auxiliaries were cut in pieces in great numbers, thinking to ſhelter themſelves in their camp; but Cæſar, determined not to loſe the preſent opportunity, attacked them with ſuch impetuoſity, that they fled in the utmoſt diſorder, and joined ſome of their other companies, who had taken ſhelter in the mountains. As ſoon as Cæſar found himſelf in poſſeſſion of the enemy's camp, he was ſurpriſed to ſee the luxurious ſplendor that appeared in the tents of the chiefs, for it had more the appearance of an eaſtern entertainment, than that of the character of military officers, who had no dependance on any thing but their courage.

Cæſar, however, would not ſuffer his ſoldiers to touch any thing belonging to the enemy, till he had defeated ſuch as had taken ſhelter in the mountains, for he knew the fatal effects of luxury, and that the beſt diſciplined armies had been enervated by it. Accordingly he drew a line acroſs the mountains, while the ſcattered remains of Pompey's army being reduced

reduced to the greateſt ſtraits for want of water, attempted to get to the city of Lariſſa, where they doubted not but they would get a freſh ſupply of proviſions.

In this reſolution they found themſelves diſappointed by the vigilance of Cæſar, who oppoſed their march by a body of men, whom he diſpatched for that purpoſe, ſo that the poor wretches were obliged to retire again to one of the mountains, where to their great joy they had the good fortune to meet with ſome freſh water. But Cæſar preſſed them ſo hard, that they were obliged to beg their lives in the moſt abject manner. The heroic conqueror of the world gave on this occaſion a freſh ſpecimen of his clemency, for no ſooner had the fugitives laid down their arms, than he generouſly forgave them, and ordered them to be incorporated with his army. By theſe means, he not only defeated his enemies, but he alſo conquered their moſt obſtinate prejudices, and reigned as a ſovereign in their hearts.

Such papers as fell into his hands, he ordered to be deſtroyed, leſt any Roman families might be injured by them, and ſuch as did not chuſe to inliſt under his ſtandard, were ſuffered to go where they pleaſed. Having thus done every thing that could have been performed by the greateſt ſkill, or executed by the moſt ſuperior courage, he reviewed his army, and ſuch as had been left to take care of the ſpoils in Pompey's camp, he took along with him in order to reduce the city of Lariſſa.

Pompey had fled to Lariſſa in diſguiſe, tortured with the moſt agonizing reflections, and from thence he travelled along the banks of the river Peneus, where he got on board a fiſhing boat, and ſoon after the maſter of a trading veſſel, who had known him in proſperity, generouſly granted him an aſylum in

his ſhip. He diſpatched a few of his attendants to Leſbos for his wife Cornelia, whom he had left there, but when they arrived, ſhe was ſo much overwhelmed with grief, that ſhe fell into convulſion fits, and it was ſome time before ſhe was removed. At laſt ſhe recovered, and went to meet her huſband, who received her with tenderneſs, mixed with deſpair, but at the ſame time encouraged her to hope for better things, from a reverſe of fortune that might very probably happen. The former clemency of Pompey, when he was in poſſeſſion of power, had endeared him to the natives of the iſland, who came to offer him their aſſiſtance, but he adviſed them rather to ſubmit to the conqueror: "For (ſaid he) Cæſar, though my enemy, "yet is generous." He and his beloved wife Cornelia having embarked, the ſhip continued its courſe to Rhodes, but the people refuſed to admit him, upon which he ſailed to Atilia, where he found ſome faithful friends who ſtill adhered to him. But he was ſtill ſenſible that he could not make head againſt Cæſar, and therefore all his hopes were centered in the alliances he had formed with foreign ſtates. Some of his friends propoſed that he ſhould retire to Numidia, and others, that he ſhould take ſhelter among the Parthians, but at laſt he reſolved to ſail for Egypt, where he arrived, and ſent meſſengers on ſhore, imploring the protection of Ptolemy the king. The king of Egypt was then a minor, ſo that the affair was referred to his guardians, among whom were Photinus, a eunuch, Theodotus, an orator, and Achillus, who commanded the Egyptian army. Violent debates aroſe in what manner they ſhould act, for they were afraid that if they granted him refuge, Cæſar would attack them with his whole force, and if they rejected

jected his propoſal, then he might ſtir up ſome of the neighbouring nations againſt them. At laſt, after much debate, Theodotus propoſed that he ſhould be conducted from his ſhip to the next harbour, but that as ſoon as he landed he ſhould be killed. Accordingly, a ſmall veſſel was ſent to conduct him to ſhore, and the command was given to Septimius, who had formerly commanded under Pompey.

Pompey and his friends were much ſurpriſed that he was not received in a more ſplendid manner, but what was their horror when they ſaw him ſtabbed dead by Septimius as ſoon as he landed. His head was cut off in order to be ſent as a preſent to Cæſar, and the body being left on the ſhore, one of his attendants gathered together ſome wrecks of a ſhip, and reduced it to aſhes, according to the Roman cuſtom, after which the aſhes were depoſited at the foot of a riſing ground.

Such was the end of one of the greateſt commanders that ever appeared on the theatre of life, and who might have long before reduced his country to ſlavery, had not glory been his reigning motive. 'Till he was oppoſed by Cæſar, he ſeemed to be without a rival, but that celebrated commander put his military ſkill to the ſevereſt trial, and even triumphed over him. In the latter part of his life, he ſeems to have had the ſame deſign in view as Cæſar, namely, that of ſetting himſelf up as abſolute ſovereign of the Roman people, but had he even ſucceeded in that undertaking, there is not the leaſt reaſon to imagine that he would have acted in a more generous manner than his victorious rival, whoſe ſucceſs at the battle of Pharſalia, ſet him up as ſuperior to every oppoſition.

Cæſar having thus defeated the only general that was able to oppoſe him in the field, did not loſe his time in idleneſs, a rock upon which many heroes have ſplit. He ſailed from one port to another, in order to overtake Pompey, and at laſt having learned that he had taken ſhelter in Egypt, he ſet out for that country with only four thouſand men, but his name ſtruck terror wherever he came, and bore down all oppoſition. When he arrived in Egypt, he learned in what manner Pompey had been murdered, and his head was preſented to him; but the hero, inſtead of offering any indignity, ordered a monument to be erected to his memory. The next thing that Cæſar did was to aſſert his authority as a Roman conſul, to regulate the civil affairs of Egypt, and, for that purpoſe, he ſent for ſome more forces.

The Roman ſenate had, by an act of aſſumed power, baniſhed the celebrated Cleopatra with her ſiſter Arſinoe to Syria, but Cæſar ſent notice for her to return. In the mean time, Photinus, the guardian of the young king, Ptolemy, brother and huſband of Cleopatra, raiſed an army in order to beſiege Cæſar while he lay in the city of Alexandria. The forces that Cæſar had under him, were not ſufficient to defend the city, and therefore he took poſſeſſion of the iſle of Pharos, after having deſtroyed all his ſhips, leſt they ſhould fall into the enemy's hands.

Cleopatra had raiſed an army to aſſert her right to the throne of Egypt, but no ſooner had ſhe heard that Cæſar had become her friend, than ſhe reſolved to throw herſelf under his protection, not doubting but her charms would plead more powerfully than any forces whatever.

Accordingly

Accordingly ſhe ſet out for Egypt, and being afraid that ſhe might fall into the hands of her enemies, ſhe diſguiſed herſelf, and getting on board a veſſel, was carried in a cover-lid to the palace by one Apolodorus. Her charms, and what was ſtill more, her behaviour, no way conſiſtent with decency, ſoon captivated the heart of Cæſar, who became her advocate from the ſtrongeſt of all motives, namely, love. U. C. 760.

While Cæſar was doing every thing he could to ſupport the intereſt of Cleopatra, her ſiſter Arſinoe was not idle, for, by her intrigues ſhe had cauſed a mutiny in the Egyptian army, in conſequence of which, Achillas, the commander, was murdered, and Ganymede, one of her favourites, appointed general in his room. But ſoon after, Cæſar was obliged to take refuge on board a ſmall veſſel in the river, to which he was followed by ſo many of the people, that he flung himſelf over board into the water, and with his Commentaries in his hand, ſwam till he got to the fleet that lay before the palace, by which he diſcovered himſelf to be as great a man as an individual as ever commanded an army.

The Egyptians finding that they had no reaſon to hope that ever they could conquer Cæſar by open force, had recourſe to ſtratagem, and, conſiſtent with their natural duplicity of conduct, they propoſed making peace upon condition that he would deliver up their young king, that his authority might give a ſanction to the treaty. This Cæſar complied with, but Ptolemy, though only a boy, took part with his countrymen, and ſpirited them up to aſſert his title to the crown.

Cæſar was now reduced to the greateſt difficulties, but Mithridates Pergamenus, one of his partiſans, having raiſed an army in Syria, came to his aſ-

ſiſtance, and the Egyptians were defeated with great ſlaughter. Ptolemy was drowned in attempting to make his eſcape, and the whole nation having ſubmitted to Cæſar, Cleopatra, with her young brother, then an infant, were placed upon the throne, and Arſinoe, with her favourite, were obliged to make their eſcape in the moſt precipitate manner.

For ſome time Cæſar ſeemed to have forgot that courage by which he had been raiſed to ſo much grandeur, by giving himſelf up to the enjoyment of the captivating charms of the beloved Cleopatra, but his brave ſoldiers, who had ſerved him in all his battles, remonſtrated to him on the impropriety of his conduct, ſo that he left Egypt in order to oppoſe Pharneas, a Grecian prince, who had incroached upon the Roman territories.

This Pharneas was ſon of the great Mithridates, and, as he had attempted to murder his father, Cæſar looked upon him with the utmoſt abhorrence, and having defeated him in a pitched battle, one of his officers ſlew him as he was attempting to take refuge in his capitol. Having ſettled the affairs of the eaſt, and impoſed a tribute upon the people of the different nations, he embarked for Italy, where he arrived at a very critical period, and before the people had the leaſt expectation of his coming.

Anthony, whom the people had made choice of to conduct the affairs of Rome during the abſence of Cæſar, had encouraged all ſorts of licentiouſneſs and debauchery, but Cæſar, by a conduct conſiſtent with his character, brought about a general reformation, and eſtabliſhed his ſovereignty on a ſolid foundation. He then prepared to ſet out for Africa, where the remains of Pompey's army was headed by Cato and Scipio, and aſſiſted by Juba, king of Mauritania, but a mutiny took place in the forces,

on

on account of their not having received an equal dividend of the ſpoils that had been taken from the enemy. The tenth legion, which had been ſo long attached to Cæſar, firſt diſcovered their diſcontent, and marching from Campania to Rome, pillaged the people of their moſt valuable effects.

Cæſar, who knew that no time was to be loſt, ordered ſuch of the forces as were in the city to take care of the gates; and marched out to the Campus Martius, where he demanded in the moſt ſtern manner why the ſoldiers acted ſo, and who were their leaders. The manner in which he ſpoke anſwered the intended purpoſe, and after they had mentioned their grievances, Cæſar told them they might lay down their arms, and as a proof of his regard for their ſervices, he promiſed that whatever ſpoils he took in any future expedition, ſhould be equally divided among them. The ſoldiers were melted into gratitude when they conſidered the generoſity of their leader, and all in one voice conſented to go with him wherever he pleaſed, upon which he ſet ſail for Africa, where he beſieged the city of Tapſus.

Juba and Scipio marched to relieve the place, but both loſt their lives in the attempt, ſo that none was left to command the ſcattered remains of their army but Cato; one of the greateſt philoſophers of the Stoic ſect that Rome had ever produced. He had fled from the battle of Pharſalia with ſuch of the forces as choſe to follow his fortune; and when Cæſar landed in Africa, he was in poſſeſſion of the city of Utica, and ſuch was his notions of government, that he looked upon the Roman ſenate as a moſt ſacred inſtitution.

With all the authority of a Roman conſul, he called together ſuch as had been ſenators, and were

then in his army, and encouraged them to proſecute the war againſt Cæſar, at the ſame time, putting them in mind of the glorious attachments of their anceſtors, who, from the meaneſt ſtate, had riſen to the empire of the world.

The love of liberty generally promotes enthuſiaſm in the mind, and ſuch was the caſe with Cato's friends, when he ſpoke to them in a manner ſeemingly diſintereſted, but when they conſidered the difficulties they had to encounter, they thought it more prudent to provide for their own ſafety, and therefore reſolved to truſt to Cæſar's clemency, while Cato, who thought that Rome was to periſh with the extinction of the ſenate, ſtabbed himſelf through the breaſt with his ſword. Such was the end of Cato, whoſe auſterity made him rather feared than loved, and his inflexible attachment to the letter of the law, made him often forget that benevolence by which the ſpirit of every inſtitution ought to be diſtinguiſhed. Had the government of Rome, which he wanted to ſupport, been perfect and faultleſs, his cauſe would have been the beſt that ever was eſpouſed, but experience ſhews the contrary, and therefore let his character be conſidered in any light whatever, it muſt be acknowledged that he was no better than an enthuſiaſt.

As ſoon as Cæſar heard of Cato's death, he returned to Rome, and made a pompous entry into that city amidſt the acclamations of the people, who had never before ſeen one of their own body crowned with ſo many laurels. So intoxicating is the glare of pomp, and ſo fatal is it to the liberties of a free people. The ſoldiers were all rewarded according to the time they had ſerved, and their different ſtations, and the citizens were entertained in the moſt ſumptuous manner. A contention for property

perty had hitherto ſupported them, and they took leave of their liberties in the enjoyment of all the delicacies of a feaſt. No privileges were thought too great to be conferred on the man who had done ſo much to ſerve his country, and the people having inveſted him with plenary powers, he ſet himſelf on the throne of ſovereignty, and began to attend to the duties incumbent upon him at the head of the Roman republic. He knew that luxury was the ruin of every ſtate, and therefore he made ſeveral ſumptuary laws, by which the more affluent among the citizens were confined down to rules, and all unneceſſary offices were ſuppreſſed. That the city might not be deſtitute of inhabitants, he gave rewards to thoſe who had the greateſt number of children, by which means he endeared himſelf to all ranks of people, and the iron hand of ſovereign authority ſeemed like golden chains.

Cæſar now thought to have enjoyed the pleaſures of tranquillity, but two of the ſons of Pompey, with Labienus, one of his generals, raiſed an army in Spain, and therefore it was neceſſary that a force ſhould be ſent to oppoſe them. Accordingly, he ſet out for Spain, and arrived there before his enemies imagined he had left Italy. Both armies came to a general engagement at a place called Munda, and, at the beginning, Cæſar was near being defeated, but juſt in the critical moment, when almoſt all his hopes began to vaniſh, the cohorts, the tenth legion, in order to regain the honour which they had for ſome time loſt, preſſed forward upon the enemy, and a total rout enſued. Sextus, one of the ſons of Pompey, made his eſcape, but Cneius, his brother, was taken by the Romans, and his head being cut off, was given to Cæſar, who returned to Rome, after having exacted ſevere taxes

from the Spaniards, for having, contrary to the faith of treaties, aſſiſted his enemies.

Thus we find that hitherto Cæſar's good fortune attended him, for wherever his army made its appearance, their enemies were obliged to give way. Diſcipline was the life of Cæſar's army, and his men learned rather to conquer by regularity than by any thing of a ſuperior nature.

## LETTER XXXVIII.

THE minds of the people are always elevated with hope, or depreſſed with fears, when a hero obtains the ſeat of ſovereignty by conqueſt. Some of the Romans had reaſon to fear that Cæſar would indulge his reſentment in puniſhing them in the ſevereſt manner, while others who promoted his intereſt, promiſed themſelves too much. However, Cæſar's abilities were even as great as his clemency, and his knowledge of mankind ſeemed to be as extenſive as his conqueſts. He generouſly pardoned all thoſe who had taken up arms againſt him, he inlarged the number of ſenators, but at the ſame time, left them no more than an empty name. He rebuilt Carthage and Corinth, to each of which he ſent colonies, and cauſed ſome of the moſt magnificent ſtructures to be erected in Rome, ſo that the city aſſumed a degree of ſplendour far ſuperior to what had been known in former times. Nothing could ſet bounds to his ambition, for the further he extended his conqueſts, the more he ſeemed to covet, and he even projected the conqueſt of the Parthians, becauſe they had put Craſſus to death, by pouring melted gold down his throat, as the reward of his inſatiable avarice.

As

As the greateſt part of the ſenate was attached to him from motives of intereſt, and as they had only the ſhadow of power, ſo it is not to be wondered that they beſtowed upon him the moſt flattering encomiums. His ſtatue was ſet up in moſt of the cities in the empire, and ſo far did they proceed in adulation, that they propoſed ranking him among the gods. Such in general are the extremes that men run into.

But, notwithſtanding theſe flatteries, and many others too fulſome to be mentioned, a conſpiracy was ſecretly forming againſt them by a few male-contents, who envied his power, while they admired his talents. At the head of this conſpiracy was Brutus, a young man whom Cæſar had treated with the greateſt tenderneſs, and Caſſius, whom he had pardoned after the battle of Pharſalia. Caſſius was a vain haughty man, proud of what he thought ſuperior merit, and from motives of private reſentment, an enemy to Cæſar. On the other hand, Brutus loved Cæſar from motives of gratitude, but his ſtoical pride made him prefer the antient government of Rome to any new form whatever. In vain did Cæſar continue to heap favours upon him; he was deſcended from that Brutus who expelled Tarquin, and as he inherited his ſpirit, ſo he reſolved to follow his example.

There is ſomething like infatuation attends thoſe who are devoted to deſtruction, and it often happens that even the beſt advice is conſidered as an idle tale. The conſpiracy againſt Cæſar, although deeply laid, was not ſo ſecretly carried on, but notice of it began to tranſpire, at leaſt among individuals. His moſt faithful friends adviſed him not to venture to the ſenate at the time he had appointed, but Cæſar thought his remaining at home would indicate

indicate cowardice, and cauſe him to be looked upon with contempt.

Regardleſs, therefore, of all the intimations that had been given him, he ſet out for the ſenate, and in his way thither, was met by Artemidorus, a Grecian philoſopher, who gave him a paper containing an account of the conſpiracy, but Cæſar, without ſo much as looking at it, gave it into the hands of his ſecretary, who put it among other things. At the door of the ſenate-houſe, he was met by Spurina, one of the augurs, who had foretold his death, and Cæſar looking at him, ſaid, "Spurina, the ides of March are come." "Yes, "(ſaid the other) but they are not yet paſt." Having taken his ſeat in the ſenate, he began in the moſt unconcerned manner to propoſe ſomething for their deliberation, but his doom was fixed, and the conſpirators had ſecretly armed themſelves for the purpoſe.

Cimber, one of the ſenators, approached him in the moſt ſupplicant manner, pretending to intercede for his brother, who had been baniſhed, and while he was on his knees before Cæſar, Caſca, one of the conſpirators, ſtabbed him in the ſhoulder, while Caſſius wounded him in the face. The intrepid hero, finding that the conſpirators had devoted him to deſtruction, reſolved to ſell his life as dear as poſſible, but ſeeing Brutus among them, he called out, "And you too my ſon;" upon which he threw his robe over his head, and fell down covered with three and twenty wounds, from the hands of thoſe who had been raiſed to honour by his generoſity. Such was the end of Julius Cæſar, in the fifty-ſixth year of his age, and after he had ſubdued a great part of the world. He has been accuſed by ſome hiſtorians, as one whoſe ſole ambition was to enſlave his

his country, and upon its ruins eſtabliſh his own grandeur. But, in my opinion, this is rather ſaying too much, for when he firſt entered upon public buſineſs, good fortune continued to attend him in ſo rapid a manner, that he gradually roſe to power before he was acquainted with the nature of it. Self-preſervation muſt have led him on to action, and it is evident that he and Pompey could not reign together in the ſame empire. Cæſar, therefore, was obliged to ſet himſelf above the laws, in order to prevent his being puniſhed by them. The aſſaſſinating of princes is one of thoſe convulſions in the ſtate that generally brings along with it a great number of evils, and in the end either reduces all things to confuſion, or reſtores order by a change of government.

No ſooner was the news of Cæſar's death known in the city, than the people flocked together in crowds, while Brutus, with the other conſpirators, fortified themſelves in the capitol, reſolving to defend it to the laſt extremity. In the mean time, ſuch as were the friends of Cæſar reſolved to poſſeſs themſelves of his power, among whom was Mark Antony, a man well acquainted with the art of war, but a ſlave to ſuch vices as are inconſiſtent with the character of an hero. He had aſſociated himſelf with Lepidus, a general who loved intrigues, and, having convened the ſenate, a propoſal was made, to enquire into Cæſar's late conduct. This was violently oppoſed by thoſe whom he had raiſed to grandeur, becauſe they knew, that if he was declared an uſurper, all acts or grants made by him in favour of them would be void. In ſuch a dilemma it was reſolved upon, that all thoſe concerned in the conſpiracy againſt Cæſar ſhould receive a free pardon, and ſuch acts as had been made by him

him ſhould be confirmed. By a method ſo prudent, his enemies endeavoured to ſave themſelves, and his friends to enjoy their eſtates without moleſtation.

Antony was ſo much vexed at the decree of the ſenate, that he reſolved to acquire by deceit, what he could not under the forms of law. He had poſſeſſed himſelf of Cæſar's papers, and bribed his ſecretary to inſert ſuch things in them as ſeemed to favour his intended deſign. He cauſed Cæſar's will to be read to the people, and in it was found an order to diſtribute great part of his treaſures among them, and that Octavius, his ſiſter's grandſon, ſhould ſucceed him in the government. Intereſt operates ſtrongly on the mind, and as Antony was no ſtranger to the diſpoſitions of the people, he reſolved to addreſs himſelf to their paſſions.

Having aſſembled them together in the forum, he ſhewed them the bloody robe in which Cæſar had been murdered, and uſed the moſt inflammatory expreſſions, in order to ſtir them up againſt the conſpirators. He even invoked the gods to aſſiſt him, upon which all the people cried out, that the murder of one whom they looked upon as their father ſhould not go unrevenged. The ſoldiers who had fought under Cæſar ran to his funeral pile and threw into the fire every piece of armour they had about them, and the women roſe in multitudes, and ſet fire to the houſes of the conſpirators. Happy were ſuch of the moſt obnoxious who could ſave themſelves by flight, for ſo great was the rage of the people, that they bore down all oppoſition before them.

So far Antony ſucceeded, and in order to continue in power, he reſolved to keep on the beſt terms with the populace. But while he was endeavouring to make himſelf as abſolute as Cæſar, diviſions took

place

place among the citizens, and many of them began to eſpouſe the cauſe of Octavius, afterwards called Auguſtus, who has been already mentioned as the grand-nephew of Julius. When Cæſar was murdered, Auguſtus was at Apollonia, to which place he had been ſent to learn the philoſophy of the Greeks, for he was then only about eighteen years of age. He imagined that Antony, conſiſtent with his profeſſions of friendſhip to his uncle, would eſpouſe his cauſe, and enable him to obtain poſſeſſion of the throne, which he looked upon as his inheritance. Accordingly he ſet out for Rome, where the people treated him with that reſpect due to his rank; but Antony, who conſidered him as an obſtacle to his ambition, refuſed him a ſhare of the treaſure that had been left by his uncle. By a generoſity like that of Cæſar, the young prince endeared himſelf more and more to the people; for, to the moſt handſome figure he joined ſuch a winning addreſs, that every one looked upon him with admiration, while the affairs of Antony, who was obliged to keep a guard to protect his perſon, were every day becoming more and more perplexed.

To encreaſe the difference between the contending parties, the ſoldiers who had ſerved under Cæſar declared in favour of his nephew, and each party reſolved to take the field. The conſpirators naturally attempted to provide for their own ſafety, while Auguſtus and Antony both ſought in their turn to place themſelves on the ſeat of royal authority. Antony procured for himſelf the government of that part of Italy called Ciſalpine, to which he marched with as many of the ſoldiers as he could perſuade to join his ſtandard; and, having beſieged Brutus in the city of Mutina, ſent an account of it to the ſenate

nate at Rome, pretending not to proceed any further till he had received orders in what manner he was to act.

In the mean time, Auguſtus brought over the great orator Cicero to his intereſt, who harangued with ſuch force of eloquence in his behalf to the ſenate, that Antony was commanded to return from Mutina to the banks of the Rubicon, and there to wait for further orders. Antony, who had been filled with hopes of ſucceeding Cæſar in the government, paid no regard to the order of the ſenate, upon which he was declared an enemy to the ſtate, and Auguſtus was deſired to march againſt him with ſuch forces as were attached to his intereſt; a meaſure he was more willing to comply with, as he imagined it would enable him to obtain poſſeſſion of the throne.

Panſa and Hirrius, the two conſuls, aſſiſted him, and both armies, after ſkirmiſhing ſome time, came to a general engagement, in which Antony was defeated, but both the conſuls were mortally wounded. Auguſtus now thought himſelf ſecure of victory, but Panſa, while he lay expiring of his wounds, ſent for him, and deſired him to join his forces to thoſe of Antony, becauſe the ſenate had nothing further in view but that of weakening both parties, in order to regain the power they had loſt.

However unwilling Auguſtus was to comply with the requeſt of the dying conſul, yet neceſſity forced him to it, after he found that the ſenate had done all they could to diſconcert his meaſures, and mortify his ambition. Accordingly he made propoſals to Antony and his lieutenant Lepidus, which were readily agreed to, and the three commanders marched towards Rome at the head of ſeventeen legions. As ſoon as the ſenate heard that the army was marching

to

to the city, they honoured Auguſtus with the conſulſhip, and no ſooner had he taken poſſeſſion of his new dignity, than he procured an edict to baniſh Brutus and Caſſius, as the murderers of Cæſar, and as enemies to the commonwealth of Rome, their native city.

But ſtill Auguſtus could place no confidence in the ſenate, and therefore he went to meet Antony and Lepidus at Mutina, where he learned that Decimus Brutus had been taken priſoner, and put to death. Whatever diſputes had formerly taken place between theſe three generals, all animoſities ſeemed now to be buried in oblivion, for they embraced each other in the moſt affectionate manner. The ſpirit of liberty, that had ſo long diſtinguiſhed the Roman republic, and raiſed the people to the higheſt ſtate of grandeur, ſeemed now to be extinguiſhed, for there theſe men agreed upon dividing the empire among them in the following manner:

Italy, with all the provinces in the eaſt, were to remain the common property of the triumvirate, till the ſenate ſhould be ſubdued, ſo that each party had an equality to claim. Africa, with ſuch iſlands as had been conquered in the Mediterranean, were allotted to Auguſtus. Lepidus had Spain for his ſhare, and Antony made choice of Gaul. It was alſo agreed at the ſame time, that all their enemies ſhould be proſcribed, and that no mercy ſhould be ſhewn them. This was one of the moſt horrid and unnatural reſolutions that had ever been formed, for, during the conteſts that had taken place, people often embraced different intereſts, from no other motives but thoſe of ſelf-preſervation.

In conſequence of a reſolution ſo truly diabolical, Rome exhibited one univerſal ſcene of murder and bloodſhed. Beſides two thouſand knights and three hundred

hundred ſenators, who were murdered in cool blood, ſcarce one family eſcaped the rage of the aſſaſſins, who ſeemed to have diveſted themſelves of thoſe feelings that are the ornament of human nature.

Among thoſe who had been marked out for deſtruction was the celebrated Cicero, who had carried the Roman eloquence to the higheſt pitch, and who ſtill remains an object of admiration to the learned world. When Cicero heard that his country was on the brink of deſtruction, he left his place of retirement, in order to make his eſcape from Italy, but the winds proving unfavourable, he was again driven on ſhore, and forced to take refuge in a wood. There he was found by a party of Antony's men, commanded by Pompilius Lenus, a tribune of the army, who cut off his hands and head, and carried them to Rome, for which he received a valuable preſent from Antony, who ordered the ſacred remains of the greateſt man of his age to be fixed upon the roſtrum. Such was the end of Cicero, in the ſixty-third year of his age; and, notwithſtanding his having fallen a ſacrifice to a combined ſet of ruffians, yet his name will be admired as long as the Latin language is read, or true elegance taught as a rational ſcience.

Rome being in a manner reduced to ruin, ſuch of the inhabitants as deſired to ſave their lives or preſerve their liberty, left Italy, and followed Brutus and Caſſius, who were then in Aſia. Both theſe conſpirators had for ſome time acted ſingly in their own defence; but at laſt, finding their armies encreaſe, they met at Smyrna, where they made a moſt formidable appearance: for Brutus, notwithſtanding the ferocity of his manners, yet did every thing in his power to endear himſelf to the ſoldiers.

While

While they were at Smyrna, they received information that Auguſtus and Antony were both marching againſt them, and that Cleopatra, whom Cæſar had placed on the throne of Egypt, had alſo determined in favour of their enemies. In ſuch extremity, Brutus propoſed marching to Greece; but, Caſſius differing from him in opinion, it was agreed that they ſhould attack the Rhodians and the Lycians, in order to prevent their giving any aſſiſtance to their enemies.

Accordingly they proceeded upon that expedition, and, having ſubdued the Rhodians, Brutus attacked the city of Xanthus in Lycia, which he reduced to the utmoſt diſtreſs, and the people, reſolving to ſell their lives as dear as poſſible, did all they could to oppoſe the beſiegers, and then ſet fire to their houſes, and voluntarily periſhed in the flames. Brutus did all he could to ſave them, but his utmoſt efforts proved abortive, for only one hundred and fifty eſcaped the conflagration.

## LETTER XXXIX.

THE critical ſituation of their affairs induced Brutus and Caſſius to meet once more at Sardis, where they mutually upbraided each other, for their bad ſucceſs had made them in a manner deſperate. Their friends prevented them from coming to any extremity in their diſputes, and after the evening had been ſpent in the moſt ſeemingly friendly manner, they each retired to their tents. But Brutus, who had the intereſt of the republic at heart, tho' not power to ſave it from ſlavery, imagined that he ſaw an apparition, while he was reading by a lamp.

lamp. Not however in the leaſt intimidated, he called out, "What god or devil art thou?" To which the apparition anſwered, "I am thy evil genius, and "will meet thee again at Philippia." "Meet me "there," (ſaid Brutus) and then it vaniſhed from his ſight. I have related this on the authority of Plutarch, and leave you to judge of it; in the mean time delivering it as my opinion, that the apparition was no more than the effect of his diſtempered imagination.

The forces of Auguſtus had now advanced to Philippia, and Brutus and Caſſius marched thither to meet them. The army of Auguſtus was rather more numerous than that of Brutus and Caſſius, but as the empire of the world depended upon the ſucceſs of the battle, each party reſolved to diſpute it to the laſt. Brutus and Caſſius had encamped their armies on two hills that roſe at the two extremities of a plain, taking care to ſecure the intermediate ſpace, leſt they ſhould be ſeparated, while their enemies lay in an extended plain oppoſite to them, waiting with the utmoſt impatience to engage.

In the mean time, the ſoldiers under the command of Antony got behind Caſſius, in order to cut off his retreat, ſo that there ſeemed an abſolute neceſſity of coming to a general engagement. Caſſius had delivered it as his opinion, that the beſt thing that could be done was, to diſtreſs the enemy in detached parties; but Brutus differed from him in his ſentiments, declaring, that if he was deſerted, he would lay violent hands on himſelf, as Cato had done before. Caſſius acquieſced with him, and embracing him, ſaid, "I am determined to do the "ſame," conſiſtent with his philoſophical notions, for he was a profeſſed Epicurean.

Some

Some days before the battle, Auguſtus had been ſeized with a ſevere illneſs, ſo that the command devolved upon Antony, who having made every proper diſpoſition for obtaining victory, attacked the entrenchments of Caſſius with great fury.

Brutus behaved with great valour, but Caſſius was totally routed, after he had done every thing to make his men reſume the charge. Titinius, a lieutenant, was ſent out to inform Brutus of the diſhonour, and he, falling in with a party that Brutus had ſent to aſſiſt Caſſius, tarried ſo long with them, that, upon his return, he found his general dead in his tent. Such was the end of Caſſius, who, imagining that the party ſent to his aſſiſtance were enemies, had got Pindarus, one of his freed men, to kill him. Brutus, being informed of the defeat of Caſſius, rallied ſuch of the ſcattered forces as he could bring into order, but he found his power on the decline, for the ſoldiers became mutinous, and treated their general with every mark of diſreſpect.

After the defeat of Caſſius, both armies had continued harraſſing each other twenty days, but at laſt a ſecond engagement became in a manner inevitable. The army of Brutus was now much diſpirited, for his enemies having out-flanked him, attacked him in the rear with ſuch fury, that a general rout enſued, and the brother of Caſſius, with the ſon of Cato being killed, Brutus reſolved to ſave himſelf by flight. It is probable his natural courage had forſaken him, otherwiſe, conſiſtent with his well-known inflexibility, he would rather have loſt his life than leave the field of battle in the manner he did.

Brutus was conſidered by Auguſtus as ſo formidable a rival, that the whole army were commanded to take him dead or alive. Lucillius, the friend of

Brutus,

Brutus, ſeeing his general in ſuch danger, went boldly forward to meet a body of Thracian horſe, and told them he was Brutus; upon which he was taken priſoner, and news thereof diſpatched to Antony. Antony went out to receive his priſoner, but ſo much was he ſurpriſed at the fidelity of Lucillius, that he pardoned him, and admitted him among the number of his friends. Brutus, who by the fidelity and almoſt unexampled generoſity of Lucillius, had an opportunity of making his eſcape, travelled all night, and, concealing himſelf under a rock looked up to heaven, and ſaid, "O Virtue, I have worſhipped "thee as a ſubſtantial good, but I find thou art an "empty name." As he knew that the conqueror would ſhew him no mercy, he deſired Strato, who had taught him oratory, to kill kim, but he refuſed, upon which he made the ſame requeſt to one of his ſlaves, but Strato calling out that Brutus ſhould never die by the hands of a ſlave, held out the point of his ſword, and Brutus, with an intrepidity peculiar to himſelf, fell upon it, and died.

Such was the fate of Brutus, a man of great courage, and the moſt uncorrupted integrity, but in his manner rather ſour than engaging, for, like Cato, he ſeemed to prefer the rigorous letter of the law to its mild and amiable ſpirit. He was an enemy to tyranny, as veſted in a ſingle perſon, without reflecting that the confuſion that had taken place in Rome rendered it in a manner neceſſary that a new form of government ſhould be made choice of.

The death of Brutus opened the eyes of the people, for they began to ſee that the deſign of the triumviri was, to ſet up as ſeparate tyrants, and ſhare the government between them. In this, however, they were all agreed, namely, to puniſh with the utmoſt

utmoſt ſeverity, thoſe who had taken up arms againſt them, and therefore having put many of the chief ſenators to death, they ordered the head of Brutus to be thrown at the foot of Cæſar's ſtatue, and when news thereof were brought to his wife Portia, the daughter of Cato, ſhe, like her father, laid violent hands on herſelf. In a word, ſo great was the cruelty they exerciſed to their unhappy priſoners, that their bodies were thrown to the dogs, and their houſes deſtroyed.

It is now neceſſary that we ſhould attend to the character and conduct of the triumvirate, after they became poſſeſſed of power, for it is natural to ſuppoſe that it could not be of long duration. Antony, ever vain of what he ſuppoſed ſuperior abilities, went firſt to Greece, and then to Aſia, indulging himſelf in all ſorts of ſenſuality, while he ſeemed in that part of the world to enjoy ſovereign authority, ſo effeminate were the people, and ſo ready to flatter him, rather than defend their natural rights and privileges. But he had a weak ſide, which theſe effeminate people eaſily diſcerned, and in the end he fell a ſacrifice to his pleaſures.

Voluptuous in every part of his life, and a ſlave to thoſe paſſions that are inconſiſtent with the character of a true hero, he was ready to ſacrifice every thing for the enjoyment of the fair ſex. Accordingly, in the courſe of his journey, he engaged in ſeveral intrigues, and at laſt, hearing that Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, was the moſt celebrated beauty in her time, he reſolved to viſit her. But then it occurred to him, that it would be much better to meet her as an enemy than a friend, ſo that a pretext was only wanting. Pretexts, however, are ſoon found by thoſe who want to gratify their paſſions.

Seropion,

Seropion, whom Cleopatra had appointed governor of the iſland of Cyprus, had furniſhed the conſpirators with proviſions to carry on the war againſt the triumviri, and as he alledged that it had been done by order of his queen, ſhe was ſummoned to anſwer for her breach of fidelity to the Roman republic.

Cleopatra, who was no ſtranger to the force of her charms, nor unacquainted with the character of Antony, entered on board a ſhip in the river Cydnus, in order to meet him at Tarſus in Cilicia. No ſooner had her barge made its appearance, than Antony was ſtruck with its ſplendor, but much more ſo with the queen, whoſe age at that time was only twenty-ſeven. That ſhe might rivet him the more ſtrongly in the fetters of love, ſhe contrived to make her appearance in the moſt engaging manner, or rather in ſuch a manner as is inconſiſtent with modeſty to relate, vice having taken place of virtue, and obſcenity of decency and modeſty.

Her ſucceſs was equal to the boldeſt wiſhes ſhe could form, and Antony being captivated with her charms, gave himſelf up to all manner of luxury. In the mean time, Auguſtus, who had formed more ambitious and more noble views than to repoſe himſelf in the arms of a harlot, reſolved to ingratiate himſelf with the Roman people, by beſtowing upon the ſoldiers ſuch lands as were neceſſary for their ſubſiſtence. This brought vaſt crowds of people together to implore his clemency, and among the reſt was the famous Publius Virgilius Maro, on whom the emperor beſtowed the inheritance of his anceſtors. But new diſſentions broke out, and Auguſtus found it more difficult to obtain the ſovereignty of Rome, than he had at firſt imagined. Antony was then in Egypt with Cleopatra,

patra, and his wife Luculla, being fired with jealouſy, ſpirited up her brother Lucius to oppoſe Auguſtus. This occaſioned a new war, but Lucius, being reduced by famine in the city of Peruſia, was obliged to ſurrender, and Auguſtus generouſly pardoned him, after which the conqueror returned to Rome in triumph. Fulvia, the wife of Antony, was obliged to leave Italy and take refuge in Athens, and her huſband, having been informed of the deſigns of Auguſtus, put to ſea with a great fleet, in order to oppoſe his fortunate competitor. He met Fulvia at Athens, but ſhe was then ſinking under a load of infirmities, and ſoon after died, while he again embodied his men, and met Auguſtus at Brunduſium in Italy.

Antony was joined by Pompeius, but thoſe who wiſhed well to the intereſt of the commonwealth did all in their power to bring about a reconciliation between the contending parties. A reconciliation took place, and a new partition of the empire was made in the following manner: Africa was given to Lepidus, the weſt to Auguſtus, the eaſt to Antony, and Pompeius was to enjoy Peloponneſſus, with all the conqueſts that he had made. Antony marched his forces into the eaſt, where he obtained ſome ſignal victories over the Parthians, while Auguſtus took care of the provinces in Gaul; but Pompeius having refuſed to comply with ſome propoſals made him by Antony, a rupture took place between them. Antony, whoſe ambition was equal to any perſon's whatever, ſent a fleet of ſhips to the aſſiſtance of Auguſtus, who had reſolved to abridge the power of Pompeius, and altho' for ſome time he had but indifferent ſucceſs, yet his perſeverance was ſuch, that he never deſpaired of one day making himſelf

maſter of the empire. He gave the command of his fleet to Agrippa, who defeated Pompey, ſo that he was obliged to ſeek protection from Antony, whom he knew to be his enemy; but before he could have an opportunity of ſeeing him, he was taken priſoner by one of Antony's lieutenants, who ordered him to be put to death, as an enemy to his maſter.

Pompey being thus defeated and ſlain, and his men diſperſed, Auguſtus thought it would not be a difficult matter to deſtroy the reſt of the confederates in the ſame manner. Lepidus had made an irruption into Sicily, under pretence that he was deprived of his ſhare in government, but he had loſt the confidence of his ſoldiers, who had been bribed by perſons appointed for that purpoſe by Auguſtus.

In the mean time Auguſtus prepared to meet him, but when he arrived in Sicily, he found him too contemptible to contend with. Accordingly, with the moſt undaunted reſolution, Auguſtus went in perſon to the camp of Lepidus, where a centurion attempted to kill him, but the ſoldiers, who loved him for his unexampled bounty, crowded round him in great numbers, declaring that they were willing to follow him wherever he went. Upon that, Auguſtus took up one of the eagles or enſigns in his hand, and having waved it in the air, almoſt the whole army ſaluted him with ſhouts of acclamation. This was juſt what Auguſtus expected, from the previous methods he had uſed to corrupt the ſoldiers, and Lepidus was obliged to come as an humble ſupplicant before him to beg his life. Auguſtus was too generous to put him to death, and therefore having baniſhed him to Circæum, an obſcure place, he ſpent the remainder of his days there, under all the mortifying thoughts that ariſe from diſappointed ambition.

The

The perſon who acquires power by conqueſt will be procuring many friends, while the thoughtleſs croud will flatter his vanity with all the giddy ſigns of the moſt changeable diſpoſitions. Thus, when Auguſtus returned to Rome from conquering Lepidus, the ſenators, with all the citizens, met him, and beſtowed almoſt as much flattery upon him as if he had been a god. He was ſtill ſenſible, however, that while Antony was at the head of an army, he could not call himſelf emperor; but ſo fertile was his genius, that he did not deſpair of ſerving him in the ſame manner he had done the others. Antony was ſtill in the eaſt, and having met with ſeveral conſiderable loſſes, Auguſtus cauſed a report to be ſpread, that he had become too effeminate ever to conduct an army with prudence. Indeed, this report was in ſome meaſure true for Cleopatra, in whoſe company he ſpent moſt of his time, had made him ſo uxorious, that he ſeemed regardleſs of any thing that concerned the army. To every act of the moſt luxurious ſenſuality, he added ſuch folly as is ſcarce to be paralleled in hiſtory. He gave her the kingdoms of Syria, Cyprus, Judea, Cilicia, and many other places, and upon two ſons which he had by her, he beſtowed the title of kings. Such extravagant acts of folly, unbecoming the dignity of a hero, exaſperated the Romans to ſuch a height, that they could ſet no bounds to their reſentment. Antony, hearing that Auguſtus was raiſing an army againſt him, ordered Canidius, his general, to march towards Europe, while he followed with Cleopatra.

From the account of Antony's luxurious way of living, even in the camp, when on the eve of a deciſive engagement, one would imagine that he had forgot every part of that character for which he had been ſo diſtinguiſhed, when he defeated Brutus and

Caſſius, ſo fatal are the effects of female charms upon the conduct of military commanders. However, there was an abſolute neceſſity that war ſhould be declared in form, which was accordingly done, and both armies began to make the neceſſary preparations for a battle. The army commanded by Antony was compoſed of forces drawn from ſuch countries as he had conquered in the eaſt; and that under Auguſtus, of ſuch as had long fought under his ſtandard in different parts of the weſt. Antony, beſides an army of upwards of one hundred thouſand men, had a fleet of five hundred ſhips, but altho' neither the army nor the navy of Auguſtus were ſo numerous, yet his men had been much better diſciplined, and longer accuſtomed to war. Indeed, both the armies and the fleets were ſo numerous, that it might well have been ſaid that they were contending for the empire of the world. The benevolent, however, looked with contempt, and even deteſtation, on the moſt dignified conquerors, who ſeemed to be no better than ſcourges in the hands of Divine Providence, to puniſh guilty nations. The names of many good perſons who governed as the fathers of their people were now forgotten, while thoſe who waſted whole nations, and murdered innumerable thouſands of their innocent fellow-creatures, are by too many conſidered as heroes.

Both the fleets came to an engagement at Actium, a city of Epirus, and for a conſiderable time they fought with all the ardour of men who were determined either to conquer or die. For ſome time the ſhips in Antony's fleet ſeemed to have the advantage, and probably they might have obtained it, had not his fatality in his attachment to Cleopatra haſtened on his ruin. About five o'clock in the evening, news was brought to Antony in his ſhip, that Cleopatra

patra had fled with about fifty ſhips, and Antony, regardleſs of his honour, intereſt, or ſafety, fled after her, while his whole fleet fell into the hands of Auguſtus, ſo that there remained nothing to make the victory deciſive, but that of coming to a general engagement with the forces who were drawn up near the ſhore, oppoſite to each other. But that was ſoon effected, for within four days after the naval engagement, Antony's men laid down their arms, and ſubmitted to the conqueror.

In the mean time, Antony followed Cleopatra, and, getting into the galley where ſhe ſat, remained three days in ſilent melancholy, without ſpeaking a word. At laſt he received the fatal account that his army had forſaken him; upon which, after attempting to kill himſelf, he ſet ſail for Alexandria, where he arrived, overwhelmed with grief, and almoſt in a ſtate of deſpair. All that was now left for him to do was, to take care of Egypt, by raiſing forces with the money he found in Cleopatra's treaſury, and by prevailing on her to remain with him, for ſhe had formed a ſcheme of croſſing the Red-Sea, in order to ſave herſelf from the Romans, from whom ſhe expected no mercy.

This celebrated queen was now arrived at an age, when female charms make but a faint impreſſion; but ſo vain are women, that they often think to be held in the ſame degree of admiration at forty as twenty. From the whole of her conduct, ſhe ſeems to have been as deſtitute of ſincerity as of modeſty, nor does it appear that ſhe ever had any further regard for Antony, than the love of power, which he beſtowed upon her in the moſt profuſe manner.

As it could not be ſuppoſed that Antony could long keep poſſeſſion of Egypt againſt the power of Auguſtus, ſo he made propoſals to him, deſiring

that he would only ſpare his life, and he would never give him any further diſturbance. In the mean time, Cleopatra ſent private meſſengers to Auguſtus, telling him that ſhe was ready to reſign her crown, upon condition he would take her and her children under his protection. Auguſtus gave her the moſt ſolemn promiſe, that nothing ſhould be done to hurt her, upon condition that ſhe would deliver up Antony, or cauſe him to be murdered, in whatever manner ſhe thought proper. Some of Antony's friends received notice of this ſecret negotiation, upon which he was fired with jealouſy and reſentment againſt a woman who had promoted his ruin. Cleopatra's deſign was to try whether ſhe could not captivate the heart of Auguſtus, and for ſome time Antony ſhut himſelf up in a ſolitary retreat, but hearing that ſhe was negotiating with one Thryſus, whom Auguſtus had ſent to Alexandria for that purpoſe, he broke out into the moſt ungovernable fury, having cauſed Thryſus to be ſcourged in the moſt ſhameful and cruel manner, and then ſent him to the camp of Auguſtus. As he had thus committed ſo groſs a breach of the laws of nations, Auguſtus, who ought not, conſiſtent with the dignity of his character, to have taken ſuch a mean revenge, ordered Hiparchus, Antony's ambaſſador, to be puniſhed in the ſame manner.

As Auguſtus had determined not to return to Italy till he had ſubdued Egypt, he ſent Gallus, his lieutenant, before him, who took Paretonium, and Antony, marching to its relief, thought to have cauſed a mutiny among the legions of the enemy, by reminding them of his generoſity when they fought under him, but he was prevented from being heard by Gallus's commanding all the trumpets in the army to ſound. But, what was ſtill more mortifying

to

to Antony, he received news that the ſtrong town of Pluſium had been given up to Auguſtus, and that the conqueror was on his march to Alexandria.

Antony conſidered himſelf as under an abſolute neceſſity of making one vigorous effort, eſpecially as a ſmall body of his cavalry had defeated ſome of the advanced guards of Auguſtus, and therefore he prepared to bring together all the men that he could raiſe, and all the ſhips he could fit out. He ſent a challenge to Auguſtus to fight him in ſingle combat, but the young conqueror had more prudence than to engage on ſuch unequal terms. At the ſame time he told the meſſenger to inform Antony, that there were many ways for him to die, without engaging in ſingle combat, intimating thereby, that he might imitate the conduct of Brutus and Caſſius, whom he had defeated at Philippia.

We have now followed Antony thro' a long ſeries of victories, we have beheld his riſe and decline, and now we ſhall uſher him off from the ſtage of this world, where, had he acted with as much innocence as grandeur, had he been as eager to practice virtue as acquire fame, he would perhaps not have made ſuch a figure in hiſtory. Finding that he could no longer delay coming to a general engagement, he ſpent the evening before with ſome of his friends, and in the morning went to take a view of his army, which was drawn up on an eminence near the city. He ſent orders to his fleet to attack that of the enemy, but how great was his confuſion, when he ſaw them join themſelves to thoſe of Auguſtus. The ſmall party of horſe that he had raiſed deſerted him at the ſame time, and altho' he made a feeble effort with the foot, yet they were ſoon diſordered, and moſt of them made priſoners.

All hopes now forſaking him, he returned to the city, and vented his rage againſt Cleopatra in the bittereſt terms, charging her with having betrayed him to his enemies. Whatever truth might be in that, certain it is, that Cleopatra was afraid of his reſentment, and therefore ſhe ſhut herſelf up in a tomb near the temple of Iſis, where ſhe concealed her treaſure. She alſo ordered, that it ſhould be given out that ſhe was dead, which ſo affected Antony, that he lamented her fate in the bittereſt manner. He then ordered Aros, one of his freed-men, to kill him; but the faithful ſervant drawing the ſword, plunged it into his own boſom, and fell dead on the ſpot, chuſing rather to die than to murder his maſter, who had always treated him in the moſt generous manner.

Antony beheld the fidelity of his ſlave for ſome time with ſilent admiration mixed with horror, and then, drawing out the ſword, plunged it in his own boſom. For ſome time he remained ſpeechleſs, but at laſt, recovering himſelf a little, he called out to his ſervants to put an end to his miſery. This frightened them ſo much that they all ran away, leaving him in the moſt inexpreſſible agonies, till news was brought that Cleopatra was ſtill alive, and then he deſired to be carried to her. This they complied with, but when they came to the gate of the ſepulchre, ſhe refuſed to open it. However, they flung ropes down to have him hoiſted up, bloody as he was. She treated him in the moſt tender manner, and he begging for a glaſs of wine in order to haſten his end, entreated her to ſave her life on any terms whatever. Having uttered theſe words, he expired in the arms of Cleopatra, whoſe charms co-operating with his own paſſions, had promoted his ruin.

Auguſtus

Auguſtus, having heard that Cleopatra was ſhut up in the tomb, ſent Proculus to her, with a view of procuring her treaſure, but ſhe refuſed him admittance, upon which, while ſhe was conferring with one of his attendants thro' the grate, Procullus got in at one of the windows, accompanied by two more, which Cleopatra ſeeing, would have ſtabbed herſelf, had they not prevented her, by wreſting the dagger out of her hand. At the ſame time he examined every place within the tomb, and removed what he thought ſhe might make uſe of to deſtroy herſelf, and then leaving her to her own melancholy reflections, returned to the camp to inform Auguſtus, who waited for him with the utmoſt impatience, not doubting but Cleopatra would grace his triumph.

When Auguſtus had received the intelligence brought him by Procullus, he enjoyed the utmoſt ſatisfaction, and gave orders that Antony ſhould be buried in a manner ſuitable to his rank. He likewiſe ordered her to be brought to the palace, and treated with the utmoſt reſpect; but her melancholy preyed upon her ſpirits, and for ſome time ſhe refuſed to take any ſuſtenance. Her deſign was to have ſtarved herſelf to death, but Auguſtus cauſed it to be intimated to her, that if ſhe did ſo, he would withdraw his protection from her children. Maternal tenderneſs took place of every other conſideration, and ſhe reſolved to take whatever was preſcribed for her by her phyſicians. To impreſs the inhabitants of Alexandria with terror, and at the ſame time procure from them that homage he had ſo long wiſhed for, Auguſtus made a magnificent entry into that celebrated city, where he was treated with all ſorts of flattery and adulation, but his triumph was diſgraced, by cauſing Ceſario, the ſon of Cæſar, and Antyllus,

the ſon of Antony, both by Cleopatra, to be put to death. This was an act of cruelty, for which no excuſe can be pleaded, for generoſity is the greateſt virtue that can be found in the breaſt of a conqueror. Clemency and moderation are more illuſtrious in a hero, who has ſubdued nations, than the greateſt glare of power, for by that they convince the conquered, that they can triumph over their own paſſions. The love of a conquered people is a better guard for a conqueror, than the army by which his laurels were acquired, for cruelty is ſure to create hatred.

## LETTER XL.

AS ſoon as Auguſtus had reſtored the peace of the city, and given orders concerning ſuch things as were neceſſary, he returned to viſit Cleopatra, whom he found drowned in tears. Some traces of her former beauty were ſtill diſcernible thro' the veil of grief, but, like the ſetting ſun, they were too weak to attract the attention, and much leſs to engage the heart.

She fell on her knees before him, but he raiſed her up, upon which a dawn of hope revived her ſpirits, till finding Auguſtus inflexible, ſhe reminded him of Cæſar's clemency, and the many acts of generoſity he had ſhewn her. There is perhaps nothing makes a more eaſy impreſſion on the mind, than the tears and entreaties of a woman in diſtreſs. But Auguſtus was too well convinced of female perfidy to put any confidence in what ſhe ſaid. He knew that Antony had haſtened his ruin by his attachment to her, and therefore he conſidered it his undoubted intereſt not to be taken in the ſame ſnare.

Her

Her riches were all delivered up to Auguſtus, except a few jewels, and he, aſſuring her that her life ſhould be ſpared, left her to the care of ſome of his officers, his whole deſign being to make her a trophy of his victories. However, as ſhe had ſome ſuſpicions of what he intended to do, and as one Dolabella, a young Roman whom ſhe had corrupted, informed her that ſhe and her children were in a few days to be ſent priſoners to Rome, ſhe reſolved to put an end to her own life.

Previous to her putting her horrid reſolution in practice, ſhe deſired that ſhe might be permitted to viſit the tomb of Antony, and being carried thither, ſhe flung herſelf upon his aſhes, determining that ſhe would not ſurvive one who had been ſo long dear to her, and who had ſhared with her both in proſperity and adverſity. Having given a vent to her grief, ſhe returned to the place of her confinement, which was the palace of Auguſtus, and ordered that a ſumptuous entertainment ſhould be got ready. She then dreſſed herſelf in the moſt elegant manner, and having ate as uſual, ordered every one to retire except her two female attendants, Iris and Charmion. A baſket of fruit had been, by her order, conveyed into her apartment, and in it was an aſp, concealed in ſuch a manner, that none could know of it but herſelf and her women.

Every thing being now ready, ſhe wrote a letter to Auguſtus, deſiring that ſhe might be buried along with Antony, and then, letting the aſp ſting her boſom, ſhe ſunk down on the couch and died. When Auguſtus received her letter, he ſent meſſengers to prevent her from putting her deſign in execution, but too late, for when they arrived, they found her lying in the royal robes, and Charmion and Iris, who had followed her example, after putting the diadem

diadem on the head of their royal miſtreſs, fell down dead by the ſide of the couch.

Such was the end of Cleopatra, the laſt remaining branch of the kings of Egypt, and with her fell a monarchy that had continued to flouriſh from the moſt early ages, and whoſe ſovereigns had performed as great actions as we can find mentioned in hiſtory. In a public character, ſhe ſeems to have been deſtitute of every principle of ſincerity, nor did ſhe conſider the breach of the moſt ſolemn treaties as a crime. Ambitious, revengeful, and cruel, ſhe thought no crimes too great, by which ſhe could eſtabliſh her power and ſupport her grandeur. In her private character, ſhe had diveſted herſelf of modeſty, nor in the gratification of her paſſions could ſhe taſte thoſe pleaſures that flow from virtuous love. There is not, perhaps in the univerſe, any one character ſo bad, as not to have ſome ſpark of virtue remaining, and yet we meet with ſome, whoſe vices are of ſo enormous and complicated a nature, that if any virtues remain, they are totally obſcured. This laſt ſeems to have been the Character of Cleopatra, for we can only find two things that ſeem to give the leaſt extenuation to her guilt. She had been brought up in the midſt of civil diſſentions, and conſequently often in danger of her life. This might give her mind a ferocious turn, which a variety of events contributed towards the improvement of. Her dangers obliged her to call her charms to her aſſiſtance, and they compleated her ruin.

According to the dying requeſt of Cleopatra, her remains were depoſited beſide thoſe of Antony, for altho' Auguſtus was not a little diſappointed that he could not grace his triumph with the queen of Egypt, yet as the manner of her death was in high eſteem among the Romans, the honour of a funeral

was

was granted to her, and her two faithful companions, who had each laid violent hands on themſelves.

Antony being now no more, and all the other pretenders to the ſovereignty cut off, Auguſtus ſettled the affairs of Egypt, and then began to revolve in his own mind whether he ſhould reſtore Rome to its ancient grandeur, or eſtabliſh himſelf abſolute ſovereign. To ſettle a matter of ſuch importance was extremely difficult, for the examples of ſeveral others who had gone before him, ſuch as Sylla and Cæſar, made a deep impreſſion on his mind. He knew that the Roman empire was now advanced to ſuch a ſtate of grandeur, and their conqueſts ſo extenſive, that it would require the moſt undaunted courage, the moſt conſummate prudence, and the moſt inflexible perſeverance to govern it. He was not deſtitute of ambition, but ſtill he thought the taſk of ſo important a nature, that he would not engage in any thing without the advice of his faithful friends Mæcenas and Agrippa, whom he had always treated with the utmoſt reſpect, and to whoſe opinions he paid the greateſt deference.

As it often happens in ſuch caſes, where a thing of importance is referred to two friends, they generally differ in their opinions, although the motives may remain in ſecret, Agrippa adviſed him to reſtore the power of the ſenate, poſſibly in order to aggrandize himſelf, but he was oppoſed by Mæcenas, who ſaid all he could, in order to perſuade Auguſtus not to give up that power which he had acquired with ſo much toil. The reaſons, urged by Mæcenas, were conſiſtent with the ambitious views formed by Auguſtus, and therefore he reſolved to take the government upon himſelf.

From

From this circumſtance we need not be ſurpriſed that Auguſtus eſteemed Mæcenas ever after, by honouring him with a large ſhare of his friendſhip. Indeed, their tempers in private life were very much alike; for although Auguſtus was brave in the field, yet he was no ſtranger to pleaſure when the toils of the camp were over. Mæcenas was one who had ſtudied the fine arts, and was a patron of learned men, but he loved pleaſure rather than virtue, and was not averſe to flattery. He ſeems to have been one of thoſe miniſters who take pleaſure in diſtributing the princes favours to thoſe who could produce any thing fine, but it does not appear that ſolid knowledge, accompanied with utility, could ever merit his attention, and probably, becauſe he was no judge of true merit.

Under the influence of this miniſter, and particularly guided by his inſtructions, Auguſtus aſſumed the imperial authority, and by all the arts that he was maſter of, endeavoured to make himſelf as popular on the throne as he had been in the field. He pretended to confirm the power of the three eſtates, namely, the ſenate, the army, and the people, but at the ſame time, took care that nothing but a ſhadow of power ſhould reign with them, for he placed himſelf at the head of each, ſo that nothing could be done until his approbation was firſt obtained. So powerful is art in ſome princes, and ſo tamely do the people ſubmit to ſlavery, after they have been harraſſed with all the horrors of a civil war. Every title that could flatter his vanity, or contribute towards making his power abſolute, was conferred upon him, and the people ſeemed now to court ſlavery as much as their fathers had oppoſed it.

That

That nothing might be wanting to ſecure his popularity, he cauſed many new laws to be enacted, all tending to refine the manners of the people, ſo that the Romans, who had been long accuſtomed to war, began to reliſh the ſweets of peace, and to wiſh for a continuance of it. Their former barbarity had in a great meaſure been nouriſhed by the ſhews of gladiators, but Auguſtus ordered that theſe ſhews ſhould only be exhibited twice in the year, nor ſhould they begin to fight till they received the abſolute orders of the ſenate for that purpoſe, for he thought it conſiſtent with his own ſafety to treat the ſenators with the greateſt reſpect.

Certain it is, that no prince could have done more to ingratiate himſelf with his ſubjects than Auguſtus, for all ranks of people were admitted to his preſence, and he heard their complaints with the greateſt condeſcenſion. In the mean time, he never offered to interfere with the courſe of juſtice, unleſs it appeared to him that the laws had been ſtretched beyond their proper bounds, and then in ſuch caſes he would ſubmit to become an advocate for the injured party, well knowing that his preſence would plead more powerfully than his eloquence. There are many inſtances of his clemency recorded in the writings of the claſſic authors, and although ſome of them may ſeem to have been exaggerated, yet there is no doubt but many of the accounts are true. An old ſoldier, who had ſerved him many years in the wars, preſented him a petition relating to a ſuit that he had depending in the ſenate, upon which the emperor deſired him to go and hire an advocate. "Alas, (ſaid the ſoldier) I fought for you in perſon, "and not by proxy, at the battle of Actium." Auguſtus was ſo ſtruck with his honeſt ſimplicity, that he went and pleaded his cauſe for him in perſon.

Indeed,

Indeed, there ſeemed to be a total change in his natural temper, for he took pleaſure in pardoning ſuch as conſpired againſt him, and to ſecure their friendſhip for the future, often heaped great favours upon them.

But while he cultivated the arts of peace in Rome, he did not neglect to take care of the moſt diſtant provinces in the empire. Tiberius ſubdued the Certebrians in Spain, and forced them to ſubmit to ſuch terms as he thought proper. Lollius drove ſuch of the Germans out of Gaul as had croſſed the Rhine, and penetrated into that province, while Piſo, who commanded in Pamphylio, drove many barbarous nations back to their own country, who had penetrated into Thrace. Caius, the grandſon of Auguſtus, defeated the Dacians, and put many of them to the ſword. In Dalmatia, the people who had never been thoroughly brought under the Roman yoke, roſe to the number of upwards of two hundred thouſand men, and threatened to make an irruption into Italy, but they were defeated by Germanicus and Tiberius. It was remarkable, that when Barro, the general of thoſe barbarians, was aſked how he preſumed to take up arms againſt the Romans, he boldly anſwered, "That the Dalmatians were a free people, and that the Romans were murderers and thieves, who came to diſturb them in the peaceable poſſeſſion of their rights and privileges." The arms of Auguſtus were not ſo ſucceſsful in every part of the empire, for Quintillius Varus having penetrated too far into Germany, was defeated, and he with his whole army cut in pieces. This was ſuch a ſtroke as Auguſtus had not hitherto met with, and it affected him the more ſenſibly, as the unfortunate legions were the braveſt in the whole army.

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The flouriſhing ſtate of Auguſtus's affairs at Rome, notwithſtanding ſome loſſes in the provinces, was interrupted by domeſtic evils, namely, the vices of his own relations. His wife Livia, whom he had married in a ſcandalous manner while her huſband was alive, was a woman of a haughty diſpoſition, and ſhe did not fail to domineer over him with the moſt imperious ſway.

She had two ſons by her former huſband, namely, Druſus and Tiberius, but Druſus died of a cold that he contracted in the camp. Tiberius, her other ſon, was a young man of good abilities, but he was of a cruel, vicious diſpoſition, and obſtinately bent on ſeeking revenge againſt all thoſe whom he imagined gave him the moſt trifling affront.

Auguſtus had a daughter named Julia, by his former wife Scibonia, and her father having married her firſt to Agrippa, one of his lieutenants, and then to Tiberius, his ſon in-law; ſhe not only launched out into all ſorts of extravagance, but alſo plunged herſelf into the moſt horrid ſcenes of debauchery. Auguſtus beheld, with concern, the vicious conduct of his daughter, and as ſhe was become a ſcandal to the court, he baniſhed her to Pandatria, along with her mother Scribonia, forbidding any perſon to viſit her without an order from himſelf. Whatever Auguſtus felt on that occaſion, may eaſily be conceived by an indulgent parent, eſpecially as he was then far advanced in years, and ſtruggling under the decay of nature.

Under theſe afflicting circumſtances in his family, he appointed Tiberius with him in the government, and deſired that the ſenate and the people ſhould pay him the higheſt honours. He then made choice of twenty patricians U. C. 766.

patricians as a ſtanding council, who, with the ſenate, were to aſſiſt him in all public affairs, that he might enjoy the ſweets of tranquillity without interruption. He ordered the people to be numbered, and found that they amounted to upwards of four millions, from which we may conclude that mankind were in thoſe ages much more numerous than at preſent.

This was one of the laſt ſolemn acts performed by Auguſtus, for ſoon after, in his journey along with Tiberius to Illirica, he was taken ill at Beneventum, and died at Nola, in the ſeventy-ſixth year of his age, and forty-ſecond of his reign.

Whatever might be the character of Auguſtus, either in private or public life, certain it is, that the Romans treated his memory with great reſpect, and paid him the higheſt honours. On his deathbed he gave Tiberius and the council, together with the ſenate, the moſt wholeſome advice, and in particular recommended to them not to deſire to enlarge the bounds of the empire, becauſe it was already too large for the head. He recommended unity among the ſenators, and pointed out the neceſſity they were under to ſubmit to his ſucceſſor, Tiberius, whom he had by his will appointed emperor, and left particular directions concerning his funeral.

Thus died Octavius Auguſtus Cæſar, one of the moſt celebrated men we find mentioned in hiſtory, whether we conſider him as a warrior, a ſovereign, or a friend to learning and learned men. It is true, ſome part of his life, eſpecially when joined with the triumvirate, was ſtained with ſeveral acts of cruelty, but poſſibly theſe might have happened in conſequence of his deſire to promote the intereſt of the republic, and to preſerve himſelf from the power of his enemies.

Certain

Certain it is, that after the battle of Actium, no prince could have done more to promote the intereſts of hisſubjects than Auguſtus. He ſeemed to make the arts of peace his ſtudy, and he took a particular pleaſure in converſing with learned men. Many good laws were drawn up under his immediate inſpection, and the people who had been long harraſſed by inteſtine diviſions, made ſuch improvements in uſeful knowledge as had never been attempted before. At his death, the Roman empire was the moſt extenſive the ſun had ever ſhone upon. It contained great part of Europe, particularly, ſome parts of Germany, Spain, Gaul, Italy, Greece, Illyricum, Dacia, and Panonia, to which may be added the ſouthern parts of Britain, though not then totally ſubdued. Medea, Judea, Syria, Meſopotamia, Armenia, and all thoſe provinces called the Leſſer Aſia, were joined to the empire, together with Egypt, Numidia, Mauritania, Abyſſinia, and many other provinces in Africa.

The revenues of the empire were equal to its extent, for as we are able to judge at this diſtance of time, near forty millions of our money was yearly paid into the treaſury. No period ever produced a greater number of learned men, witneſs the immortal writings of Horace, Virgil, Livy, Ovid, and many others, whoſe names will be celebrated as long as the Latin language is taught.

But the greateſt happineſs that the people enjoyed was, that of being delivered from thoſe inteſtine diviſions by which the republic had for many years been torn in pieces. The Romans were now arrived at a ſtate of maturity, they were united under one head, and inſtead of nominal liberty, for which they had ſo long contended, they enjoyed that which

which was real, even under a prince cloathed with ſovereign authority.

In the twenty-fifth year of the reign of Auguſtus Cæſar, and the ſeven hundred and fifty-ſecond year of Rome, Jeſus Chriſt was born in Bethlehem of Judea, about four thouſand and four hundred years after the creation of the world. This was one of the moſt important events that ever took place; for that Divine Teacher came to revive the knowledge of real virtue among men, and bring them back to a ſenſe of that original righteouſneſs by which alone they can obtain the divine favour. At that time there was a general expectation in the world, that ſome great perſon was to appear, and although the birth of our Saviour did not make a very conſpicuous appearance, yet that doctrine taught by him ſpread itſelf throughout the Roman empire.

## LETTER XLI.

A. D. 15. WE have hitherto traced the affairs of Rome through a variety of changes always riſing to grandeur, but now we muſt gradually follow them to a ſtate of declenſion, through a ſeries of luxury and crimes unknown to their anceſtors. Tiberius aſcended the throne when the empire was in a ſtate of tranquillity both at home and abroad, and although his manners were rather forbidding than engaging, yet, had he attended to the intereſt of the republic, he might have reigned glorioufly and been crowned with immortal honour; but advantages are often thrown away upon thoſe who are moſt unworthy of them.

He had been but a ſhort time on the throne when jealouſy ſeemed to get the better of his reaſon, and

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as Agrippa Poſthumus, the ſon of Julia, by the general of that name, was ſtill alive, he reſolved to deſtroy him. Accordingly, he firſt ordered him to be baniſhed to the iſland of Plauſium, and then employed a centurion devoted to his intereſt, to murder him privately. News of his death being brought to Rome, Tiberius diſſembled with ſo much art, that he denied having any hand in, or any knowledge of the murder, and at the ſame time threatened to puniſh the centurion in the moſt exemplary manner, but this underſtrapper had been taught how to act his part, and as the emperor had promiſed to indemnify him, ſo the matter was huſhed up, and no further notice taken of it.

The ſpirit of liberty was now in a manner extinct among the Roman people, they ſeemed to court ſlavery, and that they might give the moſt convincing proof of their ſordid diſpoſition, every thing, even of a legal nature, that ought to have come under the cognizance of the ſenate, was referred to the emperor. Indeed, Tiberius was ſo well acquainted with diſſimulation, that he triumphed in the moſt eaſy manner over the ſenate, who were now ſunk into all ſorts of luxury. He repreſented to them, that he had not abilities ſufficient to govern the empire after ſo great a man as Auguſtus, and therefore expatiated largely on the obligations he was under to the ſenators, who aſſiſted him with their council. He even went ſo far as to tell them that any one province of the empire was ſufficient to ſatisfy his moſt ambitious views, upon which Aſinius Gallus boldly demanded which of the provinces he would make choice of.

Tiberius, who did not expect ſuch a queſtion being propoſed to him, was conſiderably diſconcerted, but aſſuming an air of humility, he told the ſenate

ſenate that it was inconſiſtent with the duty he owed to the public, to make choice of any ſingle province, but to abide by their directions.

Gallus began to look upon the queſtion propoſed by him as rather imprudent, and Tiberius being importuned by the adulations of the ſenate, took upon himſelf the whole government, and reigned in a far more arbitrary manner than any had ever done before him.

The firſt years of the reign of Tiberius were diſtinguiſhed by many acts of clemency, for he often refuſed to puniſh thoſe who had publicly libelled him, telling their accuſers, that people in a free city ought to deliver their ſentiments with freedom. Nay, it often happened, that when the ſenate offered to ratify whatever he ſhould think proper to dictate, he would tell them that he was not infallible, and therefore they ought not to truſt him with too much power. Some perſons propoſed that he ought to raiſe the taxes, in order to ſupport his own grandeur; he anſwered, "that he would act as a "faithful ſhepherd, by ſhearing his ſheep without "ſtripping off their ſkins."

Nor were his views confined to ſuch things as ſeemed only to aggrandize himſelf by a well-timed diſſimulation, for he made ſeveral laws to puniſh all abuſes of a public nature, ſuch as diſorderly houſes, and every thing that tended towards corrupting the morals of the people. Before that time, it had been but too common for the people in Rome to aſſaſſinate each other as they were walking along the ſtreets, and ſeditions were very frequent, eſpecially among thoſe who had lived before the government was properly ſettled; but Tiberius put a ſtop to theſe proceedings, and made the people pay a proper regard to the laws. On the other hand,

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the ſenate did all they could to flatter his vanity, and whatever he might think of them, he endeavoured to conciliate their affections.

While Tiberius was thus endeavouring to ingratiate himſelf with the people by all the arts of diſſimulation, Germanicus acquired great popularity among the ſoldiers, who were in a manner devoted to his intereſt, and they reſolved to chuſe him emperor. Prudence, however, hindered him from complying with the requeſt of the army, and in order to give the emperor a convincing proof of his attachment to his intereſt, he, at the hazard of his own life, ordered all thoſe to be put to death who ſought to force the honour upon him. Tiberius was charmed to hear of the loyalty of Germanicus, but when he was informed that he had carried his conqueſts beyond the Rhine, and ſubdued ſeveral barbarous nations, his jealouſy began to take the alarm, and therefore he reſolved, if poſſible, to get him into his power, where he would not have the legions to aſſiſt him, in caſe any injury was offered to him.

While he was projecting ſchemes to bring about the deſtruction of Germanicus, an impoſtor ſtarted up in Italy, who aſ- A. D. 17. ſumed the name of Agrippa, who had been dead many years, and however idle and inſignificant the report might appear, yet ſuch was the popular clamour, that the ſtate ſeemed to be threatened with inteſtine convulſions. The real name of this impoſtor was Clemens, and Tiberius, ever a maſter of the arts of diſſimulation, employed two ſoldiers to ingratiate themſelves into his favour, which they did, and brought him priſoner to the emperor, who ordered that he ſhould be confined in a dungeon, and

and there he was put to death in the moſt private manner.

While Tiberius was going on in this manner, the Parthians rebelled and murdered two of their kings, for they were of ſuch a reſtleſs diſpoſition, that neither threatnings nor promiſes could bring them into order. Tiberius, who on other occaſions of a ſimilar nature would have been ready to take the field, embraced this opportunity of recalling Germanicus with the legions under his command, for which purpoſe he ſent notice to him that the ſenate had decreed him a triumph, and that it would be much more for his intereſt to return to Italy than to remain in Germany, where he had done every thing in his power to curb the inſolence of the barbarians.

In anſwer to theſe ſolicitations, Germanicus deſired leave of the emperor to remain one year longer in Germany, in order to finiſh his conqueſts, but Tiberius, like a true maſter of diſſimulation, prevailed upon him by a great number of promiſes to change his reſolution. Accordingly, he returned to Rome, where he was treated with the utmoſt reſpect, for many thouſands of the citizens came out to meet him, and the gracefulneſs of his perſon, with the appearance of his five children in his triumphal chariot, made him an object of admiration to all who beheld him. Tiberius endeavoured to diſſemble his reſentment, and ſeemed to join with the reſt of the citizens in the general applauſe, but all he wanted was to ſend the object of his reſentment out of Rome, leſt he ſhould eclipſe himſelf in glory.

The ſeverity that the proconſuls had ſhewn towards the inhabitants of the ſeveral conquered provinces in Aſia, induced them to preſent remonſtrances to the emperor, who, in conjunction with the conduct of the Parthians, ſeemed not unworthy

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of his notice. To conceal his real intentions, he propoſed in the ſenate, that Germanicus ſhould have all Aſia aſſigned him, but he took care at the ſame time that Cneius Piſo ſhould be ſent thither, in order to be a check upon his conduct, and reſtrain his ambition within proper bounds.

Accordingly Germanicus ſet out for Aſia with every thing neceſſary for carrying on the war, and although Piſo did all he could to fruſtrate his deſigns, yet he took Cilicia, and placed the King of Armenia upon the throne, after he had been driven from it by an uſurper. The Parthians were obliged to ſubmit at the ſame time but nothing could ſet bounds to the rage of Piſo, and the implacable malice of his wife Plancina, who left nothing undone to traduce his character in the moſt infamous manner. Germanicus, however, was endowed with ſuch an equanimity of temper, that he took no notice of the plots hatching againſt him, and to convince them that he was under no apprehenſion from any thing they could do, he undertook a voyage to Egypt, pretending that his ſole motive was the viſiting the antiquities of that celebrated country, which were then eſteemed ſuperior to all others. A. D. 19.

Upon his return from Egypt, he fell ſick, and not doubting but poiſon had been adminiſtered to him, by ſome perſons employed by Piſo, he ſent for that general, and told him, that for the future, he would have no farther connections with him. At laſt, the ſeverity of his diſtemper mocked the power of medicine, and he died lamented by every worthy perſon in the whole empire. Every one mourned for him, for all had formed the ſtrongeſt hopes of him as the next ſucceſſor to the emperor. Indeed, the affliction of the people was ſo great, that

they ſeemed by every part of their conduct to have marked Piſo out for deſtruction. To encreaſe the general diſcontent, Agrippa, the wife of Germanicus, arrived in Italy, carrying the dead aſhes of her huſband, and attended by her children, who had been along with their father throughout every part, both in Germany and the eaſt.

As ſhe approached the city, moſt of the people came out to meet her, and being attended by the ſenators in their robes, the whole exhibited one ſcene of lamentation. For ſome time they endeavoured to conceal their ſorrow, but no ſooner were the aſhes of the deceaſed depoſited in the Mauſoleum that had been erected for Auguſtus, than they tore their hair, and teſtified their grief by every action that could be expreſſed. From this we may learn, that the only way to procure ſolid peace, and the real love of our fellow-citizens, is by doing every thing in our power to promote the intereſts of our country, without an attachment to any party whatever.

The emperor, conſiſtent with his common diſſimulation, pretended to be as much affected with the death of Germanicus as any perſon in Rome; and although he knew that Piſo had acted as the inſtrument of his cruelty and inſatiable revenge, yet he permitted an accuſation to be preferred againſt him, at the inſtance of Agrippa, the wife of the deceaſed.

Whether Germanicus was taken off by poiſon, or by any other of Piſo's machinations, does not certainly appear, eſpecially at this diſtance of time, when it is ſo difficult to enquire into things of that nature. All we know is, that the trial was protracted ſeveral weeks, and, before the judges could come to a final reſolution, Piſo made an end of himſelf,

ſelf, conſiſtent with the depraved notions of his countrymen. The judges tried his wife Plauſina, whoſe guilt cried aloud for condign puniſhment, but by the intereſt of ſome of thoſe in power, ſhe was acquitted, and reſtored to all that her huſband enjoyed as a free citizen.

Tranquillity being in ſome meaſure reſtored, and Tiberius looking upon government as a thing too difficult for him to manage, aſſociated himſelf with Druſius, his own ſon, and retired to the country, under pretence of taking the benefit of the air, in order to re-eſtabliſh his health. But the emperor was not ſuffered to enjoy that peace which he ſeemed ſo eager to covet. He had been extremely cruel in granting an unlimited power to the quæſtors in Gaul, and they had oppreſſed the people in the moſt unjuſt manner.

At laſt they took up arms, and were ſeconded by Sacrovir and Florus, two very experienced generals, and at that time formidable enemies to the Roman power, but they were defeated with great ſlaughter by the legions under the command of Caius Sibius, who had been ordered to march againſt them. Some other diſturbances happened at the ſame time, but the Roman diſcipline prevailed over every oppoſition, and peace was again reſtored to the empire.

From this period we muſt begin to conſider the emperor Tiberius in a new light, or rather in thoſe natural colours that marked out the moſt diſtinguiſhed parts of his character, namely, a pleaſure in making his ſubjects unhappy, an unſatiable revenge againſt all thoſe whom he ſuppoſed his enemies, and a determined reſolution to wreak his vengeance upon them. Mean, ſelfiſh, and ſuſpicious, he employed none but ſuch as were of the ſame diſpoſition with himſelf; and the corruptions of morals

in the court, or at the fountain head, diffuſed itſelf among all ranks of people in the empire. Virtue was reduced to an empty name, and vice was cultivated under its ſacred character. Every obligation to the performance of moral actions was neglected, or rather deſpiſed, and the people in general ſeemed to be haſtening towards their deſtruction. No regard was paid either to promiſes or covenants, and ſuch a general inſincerity took place, that one is ready to imagine that both private and public virtue forſook the Romans at once.

Sejanus, the favourite of the emperor, and one of the vileſt wretches that ever exiſted, inſinuated to Tiberius that Cremutius Cordus, who had written the annals of Rome, was an enemy to monarchical government, and therefore it was reſolved upon that he ſhould loſe his life; but the intrepid patriot finding himſelf devoted to deſtruction, laid violent hands upon himſelf before his enemies could wreak their vengeance upon him. This Sejanus was by birth a Volſcian, and with reſpect to his natural qualities, one of thoſe wretches who inſinuate themſelves into the favour of their ſovereigns, in order to domineer over the people, while the ſacred ſanction of the throne ſcreens them from public juſtice. Cunning, ſly, artful, and deceitful, he pretended to be the friend of the people, while he was no more than the ſervile minion of his maſter. By his obſequiouſneſs, he had riſen to the higheſt degree of power, and although his extraction was mean, yet he had ſo far ingratiated himſelf with the emperor, that nothing was done without his concurrence. In a word, he was one of thoſe monſters that are at all times a ruin to the commonality, where they are encouraged either by weak or wicked princes. Moral obligation was not conſidered

ſidered by him as any way important, and every thing of a political nature that ſeemed moſt likely to aggrandize the power of the prince and enſlave the people, was looked upon as the moſt valuable qualification of a miniſter, whoſe deſign was to trample upon the rights of the people, and make them abject ſlaves.

This wretch, notwithſtanding his mean original, yet had the moſt ambitious views, and from a variety of circumſtances, it appears that he even aimed to make himſelf emperor of Rome. He bribed one of his creatures to murder Druſius, the ſon of Tiberius, who never called him to an account for ſuch a flagrant act of cruelty. Tiberius, though in many reſpects a man not deſtitute of natural abilities, yet became a dupe to the abilities of his miniſter, who, finding that he could not eſtabliſh his power while the children of Germanicus were alive, perſuaded his maſter to retire to a private ſeat in the country, not doubting but that in his abſence, he would have an opportunity of governing the empire alone.

The emperor complied with his requeſt; but, as his place of retirement was in the Campania near Rome, he found that ſo many people came daily to him with petitions, that he reſolved to look out for a place more retired from the world, for it appears that he was now tired with the affairs of government, and wanted to enjoy that tranquillity which cannot be had on a throne. Accordingly, he retired to the iſland of Capua near Naples, where he gave himſelf up to ſuch debaucheries as are not proper to be mentioned. Unnatural crimes were tranſacted daily in his preſence, and he ſeemed to take a pleaſure in ſuch things as are ſhocking to human nature. Women of the higheſt rank were debauched by a

lawleſs tyrant, and all the ſober people in the empire looked upon him as a monſter not worthy of a place in human ſociety.

While he was thus indulging himſelf in ſuch crimes as are a diſgrace to human nature, his favourite Sejanus was endeavouring to eſtabliſh his power in the city, by means that will at all times make a man odious to his fellow ſubjects. Informers of the baſeſt ſort were employed to give notice of what paſſed in every private company, and words ſpoken in the moſt innocent manner were often conſtrued into crimes. The moſt ſacred character was not free from blame, nor could virtue itſelf protect the moſt dignified.

Accounts of his proceedings were regularly ſent to the emperor, who did not ſo much as call in queſtion the conduct of his miniſter, whoſe ſole intention ſeems to have been to make himſelf great on the ruins of the republic. The children of Germanicus were looked upon by the people as he undoubted heirs to the imperial crown, and therefore Sejanus procured a vile perſon, one of his own creatures, to arreſt the two oldeſt, namely, Nero and Druſius, and they were put to death privately in a dungeon. In a word, this vile monſter Sejanus went on in ſuch a manner, that all ranks of people looked upon him as an object of deteſtation. He ſet at defiance the moſt ſacred obligations, and ſeemed deſirous of power for no other purpoſe but that of trampling upon the rights of a brave and free people, who had arrived at a ſtate of grandeur unknown to all the nations around them.

The aſpiring views of Sejanus, which ſeemed to flow from a mind ſolely actuated by ambition, alarmed the fears of the emperor, and he began to look upon himſelf as under an abſolute neceſſity of taking

taking care to preſerve himſelf. Accordingly, he cauſed his favourite miniſter to be apprehended, but, conſiſtent with every part of his character, diſſembled ſo much, that he ſent a reſcript to the ſenate, deſiring them to ſhew him all the favour they could conſiſtent with the laws, and at the ſame time told Sejanus that he would have ſhips ready to convey him out of Italy, if any thing of a rigorous nature ſhould happen. The ſenate, however, were not in the leaſt unacquainted with the natural diſpoſition of the emperor, and therefore, as ſoon as Sejanus was brought before them, they ordered him for immediate execution.

This was a reverſe of fortune that he little expected, and to his great mortification, all thoſe who pretended to be his friends forſook him as a perſon with whom it was not ſafe to have any connection. Nay, they even loaded him with curſes and execrations while he was leading to the place of execution. When the executioner had ſtrangled him, the people dragged his dead body through the ſtreets, and, not ſatisfied with that, they wreaked their vengeance upon all his children and dependants. Such in general is the fate of favourites, and it ought to be a leſſon to ſtateſmen never to forget the intereſts of the people, and never to put any confidence in the promiſes that an arbitrary tyrant may happen to make to them.

One would have imagined that the death of the favourite would have induced the emperor to relax his ſeverity, and cultivate the affections of his people; but quite the reverſe took place.

Caligula, the ſon of Germanicus was ſtill alive, and as he was vicious in the whole of his manners, Sextus Vertilius wrote a ſatire againſt him, for which he was put to death, and ſoon after Plauſina,

the wife of Piſo, ſhared the ſame fate, unpitied by every one who wiſhed well to their country. All thoſe who h ' been the partizans of Sejanus, either ſuffered death by the hands of the common executioner, or made away with themſelves, conſiſtent with the depraved notions they had imbibed.

Indeed, ſo many executions daily happened, that the city of Rome reſembled a ſlaughter-houſe rather than a place ſet apart for the reception of civil ſociety. The ſtreets were deluged with blood, and in every corner was to be ſeen the mangled bodies of the unhappy ſufferers. This moſt inhuman of all tyrants, who ſeemed utterly deſtitute of natural affection, and of even more than a brutal diſpoſition, was ſo loſt to all ſentiments of humanity, that he even ordered many of the poor wretches who had incurred his diſpleaſure, to be tortured in his preſence. He took pleaſure in beholding their ſufferings, for his mind was ſo filled with ſuſpicion, that he looked upon every one who approached him as his enemy. The city of Rome was filled with mourning from one end to the other, and no one looked upon himſelf as in a ſtate of ſafety, for informers were employed to accuſe the innocent, who generally fell a victim to the cruelty of the tyrant.

In the mean time, many of the inhabitants of the provinces revolted, and made many depredations upon thoſe who would not join with them in the general inſurrection, and ſo loſt was the emperor to every ſenſe of obligation owing by him to the public, that he paid no regard to them, and even wiſhed that Rome itſelf ſhould die with him. In ſuch a deteſted manner this tyrant lived ſome years in his place of retirement, and that he ſhould have lived ſo long muſt remain a convincing proof that both private and public virtue were extinguiſhed among

among the Roman people. A variety of diſeaſes, the conſequences of his debaucheries, now ſeemed to threaten his diſſolution, and then he began to think of ſome perſon proper to be appointed his ſucceſſor in the empire.

He was ſtrongly prejudiced againſt Caligula, the ſon of Germanicus, but for all that, he reſolved at laſt to fix upon him as his ſucceſſor. His deſign in ſo doing ſhews, that he was a profound politician; for, as he was convinced that his own vices were of a moſt glaring nature, ſo he thought that Caligula would carry things to ſuch an extremity, that the latter would obſerve the former, and the people would even wiſh for another Tiberius. News of this reſolution having been tranſmitted to Caligula, he was ſo earneſt to obtain the imperial crown, that he gave orders to have the emperor ſmothered, by putting upon him a great number of pillows; and, after a reign of twenty-two years, he died at the advanced age of ſeventy-eight.

Upon a careful peruſal of the Roman Hiſtory, we find none of the emperors who reigned ſo long, and at the ſame time, was ſuch an object of deteſtation as Tiberius. Whatever he was in his youth, certain it is, that after the death of Auguſtus, he aſſumed a character that ſurpriſed all the people. He had no ambition to acquire what is properly called real greatneſs, or ſolid glory; but his mind was fixed on cruelty, and his time ſpent in debauchery. In a word, he was a monſter in human ſhape; he was nominal governor of a great republic, but at the ſame time, he domineered over the people in ſo cruel a manner, that they conſidered him as an infernal devil ſent from hell to torment them.

The moſt remarkable event that happened in the reign of this emperor, was the crucifixion of our

Saviour, Jeſus Chriſt, at Jeruſalem, who ſuffered by order of the governor, Pontius Pilate. This happened about four years before the death of Tiberius, and as ſoon as the event took place, we are told that Pilate ſent an account of his miracles to Rome, declaring that he believed him to be a God; but the ſenate refuſed to admit him to that honour on account of the enmity they had to the Jews. The conſequence, however, was, that the goſpel was preached to the world, and life and immortality brought to light.

## LETTER XLII.

CALIGULA, the ſucceſſor of Tiberius, was ſo named on account of the little buſkins he wore, for he ſeldom put on any other dreſs beſides that of the common ſoldiers, whoſe favourite he was, and among whom he had been brought up from his infancy.

Few princes ever aſcended the throne with ſo many appearances of reigning in the hearts of the people, for he was the ſon of Germanicus, whom the army adored as a father rather than a general, and as his predeceſſor had been a moſt mercileſs tyrant, the citizens, as well as the ſenators, did not imagine that human nature could produce ſuch another monſter of iniquity. Crowds of people went out to meet him as he approached the gates, and their acclamations were ſuch as ſeemed even to border on madneſs, for no titles, however flattering, were thought too great to be beſtowed upon him. Statues of him were ſet up in every part of the empire, and Artabanus, king of Parthia, voluntarily did homage to the Roman eagles. The funeral rites

rites of the late emperor were ſolemnized in the moſt ſplendid manner, and that he might give his ſubjects a proof of his filial piety, he ordered games to be celebrated in memory of his father Germanicus, and brought the aſhes of his mother and brother from the iſland of Portia and Pandataria, to be depoſited in Rome. All the laws that had been diſuſed in the reign of Tiberius, he cauſed to be revived and enforced, and made many new regulations for the good of the people. He ſeemed to be deſtitute of ſuſpicion, the vice of his predeceſſor, and when any one told him of a conſpiracy, he paid no regard to it, telling them he had done nothing to incur the diſpleaſure of any honeſt man.

Such of the magiſtrates as had incurred the diſpleaſure of the people, he cauſed to be baniſhed, among whom was Pontius Pilate, who crucified our Saviour, ſent to Tranſalpine Gaul, where he died by his own hands. When any of the knights were convicted of crimes, he cauſed them to be puniſhed in the moſt exemplary manner. Such tributary kings as had been illegally driven from their thrones by Tiberius, he cauſed to be reſtored, and beſtowed upon them ſeveral privileges.

Such was the beginning of the reign of Caligula, and it muſt be acknowledged that nothing could ſeem better calculated to inſure popular applauſe; but unfortunately for Rome, it was but of ſhort continuance, for he had not been above a year on the throne, when he gave ſuch inſtances of his cruelty, as even indicated that he would be more odious to the Romans than Tiberius.

He had been taken ill ſome time after he had aſcended the throne, and in order to enjoy the benefit of freſh air, he retired to Campania. The people were ſo much concerned leſt he ſhould be taken

taken off by death, that ſome of them made vows to devote themſelves in ſacrifice to the gods upon condition that he ſhould recover. Among thoſe who were moſt forward to dedicate themſelves to ſacrifice for his memory, was one Politus; and although in the madneſs of his enthuſiam he never imagined that he would be obliged to fulfill his vow, yet no ſooner had the emperor recovered than he inſiſted that he ſhould make good what he had ſworn in ſo ſolemn a manner. Accordingly he was led round the walls by boys crowned with flowers, and then as a juſt reward for a raſh promiſe, he was thrown headlong from the walls and daſhed in pieces.

Some others ſuffered the ſame fate, and he even cauſed his father-in-law to be put to death in the moſt illegal manner, upon the evidence of falſe witneſſes, who had been ſuborned for that purpoſe. Some have thought that Caligula would never have acted in ſuch a manner, had he not been diſordered in his intellects, which was aſcribed to the effects of a ſevere fever, but whatever truth may be in theſe ſuppoſitions, certain it is, that his whole conduct made him reſemble a madman rather than a rational creature.

Neither the flattery of the courtiers, nor the fulſome praiſes of the people, were ſufficient to ſatisfy his ambition, for he even inſiſted that he ſhould be worſhipped as a god throughout the whole Roman empire. The ſtatues of the gods were by his order broken down, and his own erected in their ſtead, and every one was commanded to pay him the ſame divine honours as if he had been an immortal being. That every part of his conduct ſhould be of a piece, he aſſumed the names of the different gods and goddeſſes in their turn, and one day

day he was a male deity, while the next preſented him as a female. He cauſed a ſplendid temple to be erected to himſelf, and he had many prieſts to offer up ſacrifices to him; nay, he even went ſo far into the moſt ridiculous extravagancies, as to offer up ſacrifice to himſelf: he was both god and prieſt. He frequently invited the moon to his bed, and when he heard thunder, he would defy Jupiter to come and engage him in ſingle combat. One would have thought that there had not been ſuch a monſter in the univerſe, and yet nothing is here aſſerted but what is corroborated by the teſtimony of the moſt reſpectable hiſtorians who lived in that age among the Romans.

The manners, or rather the crimes of the emperor, ſeemed to have diſperſed themſelves among all ranks of the citizens; for the moſt illuſtrious Roman ladies proſtituted their perſons to him, glorying in that which they ought to have conſidered as their ſhame. Nor was he leſs infamous for his crimes with his own ſex, that are of ſuch a nature as ought not to be mentioned, and he even ſeduced three of his own ſiſters, and lay with them in public. He took Druſilla, the wife of Longinius, from her huſband, and, when ſhe died, declared her a goddeſs, ordering that divine honours ſhould be paid her, and that ſhe ſhould be invoked in common with himſelf. He would often be preſent at the marriages of the nobility, and as ſoon as the ceremony was over, he would take the bride home to his bed, without any regard to the laws of ſociety. Milonia Cæſonia, one of his wives, had ſuch an aſcendency over him, that, notwithſtanding all his unlawful crimes, ſhe remained with him to the laſt. This can only be aſcribed to her natural love of debauchery; for al-

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tho' he would ſtrip her naked, and ſhew her to his favourites, yet ſhe never ſeemed to bluſh.

Cruelty was another of his moſt odious vices; for no ſooner did he ſee any of the nobility acquire the notice of the public on account of ſome meritorious action, than he cauſed them to be put to death. When he ſaw any one with beautiful hair, he cauſed their heads to be ſhaved, and at other times obliged the moſt handſome among the young nobility to deſcend into the theatre, and fight with the gladiators, where, if they eſcaped with their lives, they were ſure to have their bodies mangled in the moſt ſhocking manner. When any of the gladiators came off victorious, and obtained the public applauſe, they were inſtantly put to death, leſt their fame ſhould eclipſe that of the emperor.

Nor was he leſs remarkable for his prodigality than his other vices, for he was daily inventing new luxuries; the whole empire was ranſacked to find freſh delicacies for his table, and ſuch ſauces were ſerved up as had never been ſeen in Rome before that period. He had a favourite horſe named Incitatus, for whom he made a ſtable of the fineſt marble, and a manger of ivory, and ordered that centinels ſhould be placed at the door in the night, leſt he ſhould be diſturbed in his ſlumbers. Nay, he even went to ſuch a degree of brutal madneſs as to cauſe the horſe to dine with him in public, at which time he was ſerved out of a golden cup. He told the Romans he would make his horſe conſul, and it is probable he would have proceeded to that act of extravagance, had not the animal died before he had time to put his reſolution in practice. He ordered a great navy to be fitted out, and when he had ſailed with them along the ſhore of the Campania, he cauſed them to be drawn up in the form of a creſcent,

creſcent, and then chained together, in ſuch a manner, that the whole reſembled one continued ſtreet. Houſes were built upon them and thither his whole court were ordered to come, that the ſplendor of the emperor, thrown away in ſuch a profuſe manner, ſhould make the moſt dazzling appearance. The ſumptuous entertainment that he gave to the people was conſiſtent with the reſt of his conduct, and becauſe the weather remained calm ſeveral days, he boaſted that Neptune was afraid to give him any offence, he being his ſuperior as a god. During the night, the whole fleet was illuminated in the moſt ſplendid manner, and in the morning the emperor harangued on his own fancied greatneſs.

Such prodigality ſoon exhauſted all thoſe vaſt treaſures that had been hoarded up by Tiberius, but Caligula, inſtead of retrenching his expences, invented new methods of rapine to ſupport himſelf in unneceſſary luxury. Taxes were impoſed on the moſt neceſſary article of life, and even the meaneſt labourer was obliged to contribute towards ſupporting his extravagance. Gaming houſes were licenſed in every part of the city, and brothels ſet up, where the moſt unnatural crimes were committed. When the emperor had an ill run at play, he was ſure to confiſcate the goods, and even the eſtates of thoſe who happened to win from him, and if they complained, they were inſtantly put to death. Indeed, to enumerate all the crimes committed by him in Rome is utterly unneceſſary in this work, for thoſe already mentioned may ſerve as a ſpecimen, and the bare recital of them is ſhocking to human nature.

While he was going on in this manner, ſome of the Romans, who looked upon him as a monſter of iniquity, began to form par- A. D. 41.

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ties for their own deliverance, or rather conſpiracies, by which they might rid themſelves of one who ſeemed a monſter of every ſort of iniquity. In order, therefore, to regain ſome part of his popularity, he amuſed the ſenate with an account of his intended expedition to Britain, and for that purpoſe ordered new forces to be raiſed, ſo that the people began to imagine that he was at laſt rouſed from a ſtate of ſenſuality. But notwithſtanding the number of his forces, and all the other neceſſaries for carrying on the war; yet ſuch was his madneſs, that when he came to the coaſt of Belgia, oppoſite Britain, he ſummoned, by blowing a trumpet, the people to ſurrender, and then cauſing each of the ſoldiers to take a ſhell in his hat, as a trophy of victory, ſent a pompous account of his expedition to the ſenate. He even cauſed a tower to be erected in memory of his boaſted victory, and harangued the ſoldiers on their warlike courage, altho' not one of them had ſtruck a ſingle blow.

The ſenate, however, obſequious to him in all his extravagant actions, yet reflected, that if they ordered him a triumph, it would be conſidered as an inſult, for his cowardice was now become as conſpicuous as his other crimes. The reſolution of the ſenate was conveyed to the emperor, which enraged him ſo much, that when the deputies came out to meet him, he drew his ſword, and told them that he would convince them of his power when he came into the city. Whether there was one ſpark of prudence remaining in his breaſt to deter him from wreaking his vengeance on the ſenate, or whether he waited for a more favourable opportunity to gratify his revenge, certain it is, he did not at that time make any further demands of thoſe honours he had been ſo earneſt to acquire before.

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However, the ſenate gave him one proof of their attachment, by tearing in pieces Procullus, one of their own members, who had exerted himſelf in haranguing againſt the emperor. Soon after his return from his mock expedition againſt the Britons, he was waited on by Philo the Jew, attended by ſome others of his countrymen, who had come from Alexandria, to convince him that they could not, conſiſtent with their law, offer ſacrifices to his image. The emperor received them in the moſt haughty and imperious manner, aſking them what reaſon they could aſſign why they would not worſhip him in the ſame manner as was done by his other ſubjects.

Philo the Jew was one of the moſt learned men of the age in which he lived, and, as appears from the whole of his conduct, an ornament to the Jewiſh commonwealth. Beſides ſuch knowledge as he had acquired among his own countrymen, he had made himſelf acquainted with the laws of the Roman empire, and wherever he happened to ſettle, he enforced obedience to the decrees of the emperor, ſo far as religion was not concerned. He addreſſed himſelf to Caligula in the moſt humble and reſpectable manner, and told him, that different nations had different cuſtoms, to which they looked upon themſelves as under the ſtricteſt obligations to adhere, that notwithſtanding thoſe different cuſtoms, yet they were faithful ſubjects of Rome, and had done every thing in their power to ſupport the dignity of the government.

Caligula aſked him, in an inſulting manner, "Why the Jews would not eat pork?" To which Philo replied, "That ſome nations would not eat "lamb, and yet both were loyal ſubjects." Upon that, the brutal tyrant threatened the deputies in the moſt

moſt inſulting manner, upon which Philo, in the moſt pious and heroic attitude, turned to his companions, and repeated aloud, "That God would "grant them that requeſt which the emperor had "denied." The Jews returned to inform their brethren in Alexandria of the little reaſon they had to expect any favour from the tyrant, and to their honour let it be mentioned, that theſe people refuſed to worſhip the image of the emperor, altho' many of them were puniſhed for it, by the governors of the provinces, in the moſt cruel manner, as well as ſome Chriſtians, whom the Romans conſidered in the ſame light as Jews.

While the tyrant was going on in ſuch a manner as threatened univerſal ruin to the empire, Caſſius Cherea, a tribune of the prætorian bands, reſolved to deliver mankind from ſuch a monſter. The ſpirit of the antient Romans ſeemed revived in this man, who had, on many occaſions, given the moſt ſignal proofs of his courage; but Caligula took every method to treat him with the utmoſt contempt, becauſe of his ſuperior merit. It was no difficult matter to perſuade many reſpectable perſons to join in the conſpiracy, ſince the emperor was become an object of deteſtation to all thoſe who wiſhed well to the intereſts of government and the rights of the ſubjects. Some of the principal ſenators and knights had received injuries from the emperor of a very ſtriking nature, and others were marked out for deſtruction, becauſe of their riches, which he longed to enjoy, in order to ſupport his unbounded extravagance.

Among theſe the moſt active were Valerius Aſiaticus, whoſe wife Caligula had ſeduced and debauched; Annius Vincianus, who had been treated with great cruelty; and Caliſtus Caſſius, a man of very extenſive

extenſive property. At the ſame time many others joined in the conſpiracy, all from motives of a ſimilar nature, and ſeveral incidents ſeemed to haſten the deſtruction of the tyrant. As Caligula was conſcious of his guilt, ſo he lived in continual fear, and employed the baſeſt wretches to give information againſt all thoſe whom he ſuſpected. Among others was Pompeius, a ſenator, and as it was ſuſpected that he was connected with one Quæſilia, an actreſs, ſhe was ordered to give evidence againſt him, but refuſed to accuſe him, altho' ſhe was tortured till all her limbs were diſlocated. A degree of fortitude ſeldom found in the female ſex.

This horrid act of cruelty alarmed the reſt of the conſpirators, who began to conſider, that, with reſpect to their own ſafety, no time was to be loſt, and therefore, after ſeveral conſultations, it was reſolved, that the moſt proper time to make away with the tyrant would be, during the Cirencian games, which laſted four days, when the guards would have no ſuſpicion of their intentions.

Three of theſe days having elapſed, without any thing being done by the conſpirators, Cherea began to look upon the whole of their meaſures as diſconcerted, and therefore determined that the next day, as the emperor paſſed through a private gallery to the baths, he ſhould be diſpatched, becauſe he would be then unattended, unleſs it was by a few of his domeſtics. The conſpiracy, however, was not ſo ſecretly carried on, as to be totally hid from the emperor, who got notice of it from ſeveral of his ſervants; but his time was come, and his mind was infatuated. He remained all day at the games, and ſeemed extremely chearful; for it is probable he did not believe the reports he had heard; but towards the

the evening, he went to the baths, where he was met by ſome young ſhepherdeſſes, who ſung hymns to his praiſe.

When he had been there ſome time, he reſolved to return to the theatre, but juſt as he was paſſing through a narrow gallery, Cherea ſtabbed him, and the reſt of the conſpirators being ready at the door, ruſhed in, and diſpatched him, after having given him thirty wounds. His wife and child were put to death at the ſame time, and his treaſures ordered to be applied to public uſe, and care was taken that his memory ſhould be tranſmitted with infamy to all ſucceeding ages.

Such was the end of Caligula, the fourth emperor of Rome, one of the moſt abandoned monſters that ever ſat upon the throne of ſovereign authority. His taſte for literature ſeems to have been as vicious as the other parts of his life; for it is ſaid of him, that he conſidered Livy as an ignorant hiſtorian, and Virgil as a poet deſtitute of genius. In a word, the character given of him by Seneca ſeems to be true, namely, "That he was ſent into the "world to ſhew how far corrupt nature could ex-"ert itſelf in vicious actions."

A. D. 42. Caligula being thus diſpatched, the conſpirators reſolved to provide for their own ſafety, and therefore took care to conceal themſelves in the moſt private places. The whole city was in an uproar, but ſome imagined it was only a falſe rumour ſpread by the emperor himſelf, in order to diſcover the ſentiments of the people, who were his friends, or who were his enemies. The auxiliary ſoldiers, particularly the Germans, plundered the citizens of their moſt valuable effects, under pretence that they did it to revenge the

the death of the emperor, and every ſenator whom they met was murdered in cool blood.

Such barbarities, however, were too ſevere to be of long duration, and therefore, when the troubles began to ſubſide, the ſenate aſſembled, in order to deliberate on the moſt proper methods to be uſed in preſerving the peace of the city. Some of them harangued on the neceſſity of aboliſhing monarchical government, and even went ſo far as to propoſe that the name of Cæſar ſhould be for ever extinguiſhed; but this was too late, for the ſoldiers overpowered the ſenate, and the people thought no freedom equal to that of the government's being lodged in a ſingle perſon.

During the deliberations of the ſenate, the ſoldiers, in ranſacking the palace, happened to diſcover Claudius, the uncle of Caligula, who had endeavoured to conceal himſelf, leſt he ſhould have ſhared the ſame fate as his nephew. Claudius had been looked upon hitherto as a perſon too weak to govern the empire; but the ſoldiers, who were in a ſtate of diſtraction, and ſcarce knew what they did, took him upon their ſhoulders, and conducted him in triumph to the camp.

In vain did the ſenate remonſtrate againſt the conduct of the ſoldiers, for their power was only nominal, and therefore they confirmed him in his titles, and went out in a body to congratulate him.

Claudius, who was now fifty years of age, finding himſelf in poſſeſſion of the empire, ordered all thoſe who had conſpired againſt Caligula to be put to death, and thoſe who eſcaped the hand of the executioner, put an end to their own lives. Cherea behaved with all the fortitude of an antient Roman, and

and met death with a reſolution that ſeemed conſiſtent with the whole of his conduct in life.

Whatever may be the ſubſequent conduct of princes, they generally aſcend the throne amidſt the acclamations of the people, who are apt to promiſe themſelves great things, without conſidering the depravity of human nature, or the many temptations that uſually ſurround a throne. It was ſo with Claudius, who began his reign by aboliſhing all the illegal inſtitutions of Caligula, and after ſtaining the ſcaffold with ſome public executions, he publiſhed an act of oblivion, by which all former conſpiracies were to be cancelled for ever, nor was any perſon to be puniſhed on account of them.

That he might not incur any ſuſpicion of that impiety for which his predeceſſor had been ſo juſtly condemned, he ordered, that no perſon whatever ſhould pay him divine honours, and he daily ſat in public, to hear and decide in all diſputed cauſes. He took care that the public ſhould be properly ſupplied with corn, and the ſevereſt puniſhments were inflicted on thoſe who kept back proviſions from the public markets. Pirates, who robbed ſhips, were puniſhed in the moſt exemplary manner, and that water ſhould be brought to the city, he ordered an aqueduct to be built, by which that uſeful and neceſſary article was conveyed to the moſt eminent parts of Rome. The lake of Fucinus was drained at a vaſt expence, and the waters thereof were conveyed to the Tyber, by which the ſtrength of the current was conſiderably enlarged. A mountain of three miles in circumference was levelled to the ground, and many ſtately buildings were erected by him.

Nor was his care confined to the city alone: it likewiſe extended to the provinces; for he baniſhed Herod,

Herod, king of Judea, who had put John the Baptiſt to death, and in his room eſtabliſhed Herod Agrippa. Juſtice was execu ed with great ſeverity on ſuch as had revolted, particularly the Rhodians, who had murdered ſome of the Roman citizens, and the Lycians, who had cauſed ſeveral of them to be crucified.

We have already ſeen in what manner Julius Cæſar made two attempts to conquer the iſland of Britain, and although he impoſed a tax upon the inhabitants, yet, during the ſpace of an hundred years, it had never been regularly paid. The emperor, therefore, in order to ingratiate himſelf the more with the people, propoſed that Britain ſhould be added to the Roman empire, nor was it long before a pretext was found out.

Berius, a Britiſh prince, having given ſome offence to his countrymen, went to Rome, and told the emperor, that nothing was more eaſy than to conquer the iſland of Britain, becauſe of the inteſtine diviſions that then reigned among the different ſtates.

Accordingly, Plautinus, the prætor, was ſent to command the army, and, after a variety of engagements, in which the Britons and their king Cymbeline were almoſt reduced to ſue for terms of peace, Plautinus, when he found that he was in a manner ſure of ſucceſs, ſent for the emperor Claudius, who came over to Britain in perſon, and received the homage of the people. When he had been in Britain about ſixteen days, and received the homage of ſuch of the princes as choſe to ſubmit, he returned to Rome, where he was received with every demonſtration of joy, and the ſenate decreed him a triumph. Plautinus and Veſpaſian were left to carry on the war againſt ſuch as ſtill held out againſt the Roman

A. D. 46.

Roman legions, and part of the iſland was reduced to a Roman province.

A. D. 51. Oſtorius having been ſent to command in the room of Plautinus, the Britons conceived the moſt mean notions of his military ſkill, and therefore the Brigantes, who inhabited that part of the iſland between the Tyne and the Humber, then called Brigantes, with the Silures, who inhabited South-Wales, took up arms under the famous Caractacus, a man of great valour who ſucceſſively defeated the Romans; and altho' they were more often defeated themſelves, yet the Britons made good retreats, and ſecured themſelves behind their inacceſſible mountains. From theſe places they made ſallies upon the Romans, and often cut off great numbers of their ſoldiers.

At laſt, the Britons, under the command of Caractacus, finding themſelves under an abſolute neceſſity of coming to a general engagement, the Britiſh general made a moſt excellent ſpeech, in order to encourage them to exert themſelves againſt the Romans. He repreſented to them, that the Romans were a body of lawleſs robbers, who, by force and fraud, had extended their conqueſts over many nations, who, by nature, were free, and now they were come to diſpoſſeſs the inhabitants of Britain of their antient territories. The Britons were now determined to conquer or die, and therefore a moſt bloody battle enſued, but the diſcipline of the Romans overcame the valour of the Britons, and the wife and daughter of Caractacus being taken priſoners, the brave hero himſelf fled for refuge to Carliſmandua, queen of the Brigantes, who delivered him up to the conquerors, and he was ſent priſoner to Rome. When he was brought there, vaſt crouds of people came together to ſee a man who had, by the

the greateſt conduct and the moſt invincible courage, oppoſed the whole of their power, and as he expected that, conſiſtent with the notions of theſe times, he would be put to death, he addreſſed himſelf to the emperor in one of the fineſt ſpeeches that ever came from the mouth of one whom the Romans called a barbarian. He ſaid, that had his moderation been like that of ſome other perſons, he would never have graced the triumphs of the emperor, but none could account for the events of war. He profeſſed his love to his country, but tho' at the ſame time he was defeated, and even a priſoner, if his life was now granted him, conſiſtent with the generoſity of the Romans, he would for ever acknowledge it with gratitude.

The emperor ſuffered his reſentment to give place to his generoſity, and, in conſequence thereof, pardoned the courageous Britiſh chief; but what became of him afterwards is not certainly known; probably he was ſent to ſome of the eaſtern provinces, where he would not have an opportunity of giving Claudius any future diſturbance.

The popular manner in which Claudius began his reign was ſoon obſcured by acts of a very cruel nature, that ſeemed to ariſe from his weakneſs, and the power that favourites had over him. Among theſe, the moſt chief was his wife Meſſalina, a woman, whoſe cruelty was equal to her luſt, and who, by her debaucheries, has left an indelible ſtain upon her memory. By her jealouſy and intrigues ſhe cauſed ſeveral of the Roman ſenators to be put to death, and in thoſe iniquitous practices ſhe was aſſiſted by Calliſtus, the maſter of the requeſts, Pallus the treaſurer, and Narciſſus, the ſecretary of ſtate.

These minions of court-favour exercised the greatest rigour over the Roman people; and the emperor, after having murdered Appius Silanus, who had married his mother, caused his two sons-in-law, with their two sisters, to be put to death without suffering them to speak one word in their own defence.

These cruelties occasioned several combinations among the people; and the most formidable was by Camillus, whom he had appointed to the government of Dalmatia. When that general had declared himself emperor at the head of the army, he sent threatening letters to the emperor, commanding him to resign the imperial crown; but the soldiers, whose notions of superstition operated upon their minds, refused to obey him, and therefore put him to death, while many of those who were suspected of adhering to him in Rome were executed in the most public manner, by order of the empress and her favourites.

## LETTER XLIII.

WHEN weak princes once give themselves up to the directions of favourites, the most dignified, respectable, and virtuous of their subjects are not sure that they are in a state of safety. Indeed there is then such an antipathy in court minions against those who oppose corruption, that they never think their power fully established, till they have put them out of the way, and it frequently happens, that means are seldom wanting.

The conspiracy of Camillus having proved abortive, Cecina Petus, a celebrated Roman, was accused of being concerned in it, and witnesses were

suborned

ſuborned to ſwear that he had attempted to eſcape to Dalmatia. Such accuſations, which, when preferred againſt him, were utterly falſe, induced him to take that fatal ſtep, in order to ſave his life; but he had not been long there when he was apprehended by ſome men ſent after him for that purpoſe. Every indignity, that cruelty could inflict, was ſhewn to this brave man, and when he was put on board a veſſel to be taken to Italy, his wife Arrius deſired leave to accompany him, but that ſmall favour was denied her. Not in the leaſt intimidated with the threatnings of his keepers ſhe hired a fiſherman's boat, and, embarking in it, kept up with the veſſel till they arrived in Italy. Their only ſon died about the ſame time, but ſuch was the courage of this Roman lady, that ſhe never ſhewed the leaſt ſigns of fear, for when her huſband ſeemed to be intimidated at the thoughts of his approaching fate, ſhe endeavoured to inſpire him with fortitude, leſt he ſhould bring diſhonour upon his family. Nay, when ſhe went to ſee him in priſon, after he was condemned, and ſaw him wavering in his mind, ſhe took a poinard and ſtabbed herſelf, telling him, that ſhe did not feel any pain. While the favourites of the emperor were going on in this manner, Claudius became a ſlave to ſuſpicion, nor would he ſuffer any perſon to approach his preſence, till the guards had previouſly ſearched him. Such in general is the fate of weak princes; for the ſovereign who acts equitably in the adminiſtration of government need not deſire a ſtronger ſecurity than the affections of his people.

As Claudius gave himſelf up wholly to indolence, ſo he became more and more cruel, and nothing ſeemed to give him ſo much pleaſure as the ſight of a public execution. The more elevated the rank of

the perſon who was the object of his reſentment, the more fertile was his genius in finding out new tortures to inflict upon him, and beſides three hundred knights, we are told that above thirty ſenators were executed by his order. Meſſalina, his wife, was ſuch a monſter of laſciviouſneſs, that when ſhe ſent for any of the ſenators with their wives, ſhe would order them to have carnal knowledge of each other while they were in her preſence, and if any of them refuſed, they were ſure to be immediately given up to the lictors, and executed publicly.

Nothing could ſet bounds to the laſciviouſneſs and cruelty of this abandoned woman, for, having heard much in praiſe of Caius Silenus, a young Roman nobleman, ſhe ſent for him, and after loading him with the moſt valuable part of her treaſure, ſhe obliged him to divorce his wife Junia Silius, and cohabited with him in the moſt open and ſcandalous manner.

In the mean time, the poor weak, mean-ſpirited emperor never complained, but that only ſerved to make them more public in their lewdneſs, for as Meſſalina was extreme in all her reſolutions, ſo when Claudius went to reſide ſome time at Oſtia, ſhe cauſed her nuptials with this young Roman to be publicly ſolemnized. Public games were exhibited on the occaſion, and in the midſt of the entertainments, one Valus, a buffoon, climbed up a tree, and called out that he ſaw a dreadful ſtorm riſing at Oſtia. But although this fellow paſſed for a buffoon, yet it is evident he was a quite different ſort of a perſon, and not unacquainted with the affairs of ſtate. Meſſalina, by her over-bearing temper and haughty conduct, had incurred the hatred of Narciſſus, one of the emperor's favourites, and there-

fore

fore he reſolved to embrace the preſent opportunity of bringing her into diſgrace, of which her ſcandalous conduct made her a proper object. He got two of the emperor's concubines to make known to him the whole affair, and as Claudius was a poor wretch, ſo he began to be afraid of his own ſafety.

Narciſſus left nothing undone to perſuade the emperor that his life was in danger; and that a conſpiracy had been long forming againſt him. He told him that no time was to be loſt, and that the only way to provide for his own ſafety was, to puniſh the conſpirators before they had time to put their deſigns in practice. The emperor followed the advice of his favourite Narciſſus, and came with his guards upon Meſſalina and her paramour, before they had the leaſt knowledge of his approach. Meſſalina took ſhelter in a garden, which ſhe had unjuſtly deprived the real owner of, and from thence ſent her daughter Octavia and her ſon Britannicus to intercede for her with the emperor, but Narciſſus took care to repreſent her crimes in ſuch a manner, that no regard was paid to her petition. Silius was put to death in the emperor's preſence, and as ſoon as the execution was performed, notice was ſent to Meſſalina, that her defence ſhould be heard, if ſhe made it herſelf; but Narciſſus, who knew that he would be made the firſt object of her revenge, ruſhed out, accompanied by the ſoldiers and lictors, and found her in the garden, attended by her mother Lepida, who adviſed her to put an end to her wretched life. This ſhe attempted to do, but effeminacy overcame her fortitude; upon which one of the military tribunes ſtabbed her dead. News of her death was brought to the emperor while he was at ſupper, but ſo inſenſible was he, and ſo loſt to

human feelings, that neither the woman's fate, who had long been the object of his love, the children who were the pledges of their mutual affection, nor the ſneers and brutal joy of her enemies could alter one feature in his countenance. But herein nothing ſeems to have been affected, for he was really ſtupid, as appears from his ſending for her the next day to a banquet, as if he had been ignorant of what had happened.

Claudius had been ſo long under the government and direction of women, that he could neither take nor enjoy the pleaſures of a ſingle life. This was an alarming circumſtance to his favourites, who had entertained hopes that he would never again enter into the marriage ſtate, but neceſſity obliged them to look out for a wife for him, ſuitable to their own inclination.

Accordingly, they made choice of Agrippina, daughter of the mother of Germanicus, a woman abandoned to every vice, and cruel even to a proverb, for ſhe had cauſed her own huſband to be poiſoned. Some of the ſenators were of ſo complying a temper with every thing that pleaſed the favourites, that they even undertook to threaten the emperor to marry her, if he ſhould make any objection to the propoſal. The timid emperor was too much a ſlave to his fears on the one hand, and his luſt on the other, to make any objections; and therefore, no ſooner was the affair mentioned to him, than he ordered the nuptials to be ſolemnized in the moſt public manner.

This ambitious woman was no ſooner advanced to her new dignity, of which ſhe was altogether unworthy, than ſhe ruled the weak emperor in a more imperious manner than ever he had been by Meſſalina. Her deſign was, to place her ſon Nero on

on the throne inſtead of Britannicus, the ſon of Claudius, and ſhe doubted not of being able to effect her purpoſe.

Artful and deſigning, ſhe cauſed Octavia, the daughter of the emperor, to accept of Nero as a huſband, and then told Claudius that he ought, in conformity with the conduct of the Romans in former times, to adopt him as his own ſon. This he complied with, for ſhe had ſuch an abſolute aſcendancy over him, that he could not refuſe to comply with any thing ſhe deſired.

That nothing might be wanting to qualify her ſon for the government of the empire, ſhe ordered the great philoſopher Seneca to be re-called from baniſhment and appointed his tutor, and certainly he was well qualified for ſuch an employment, as appears from his moſt excellent writings. Seneca had been born in Spain, but in his youth came to Rome to improve himſelf in his ſtudies, and he adhered to the ſect of the Stoics, at that time the moſt rigid among all the heathen philoſophers. Meſſalina had accuſed him of adultery with Jula, neice of the emperor, and although the people loved him for his ſuperior merit, yet ſhe procured an order from Claudius for his baniſhment.

Agrippina, who ſeems to have been a perfect miſtreſs of diſſimulation, pretended the greateſt affection for Britannicus, although at the ſame time ſhe waited only for a proper opportunity of deſtroying him. Many of the chief ladies in Rome fell a victim to her jealouſy, and their huſbands to her revenge, becauſe they had, conſiſtent with their duty, endeavoured to vindicate the characters of their wives. She even cauſed herſelf to be drawn into the capitol in a chariot, which gave great

offence to the people, becauſe the prieſts only were indulged with that privilege.

A. D. 52. As ſhe was not ignorant that popularity might be acquired even in the midſt of avarice, ſhe perſuaded the emperor to aboliſh ſome of the moſt oppreſſive taxes, and took care to have it publiſhed throughout the provinces, that it was done at the interceſſion of her ſon Nero. This was the moſt proper method ſhe could make uſe of to enſnare, and at the ſame time eſtabliſh his popularity; for although her own life was one continued act of diſſimulation and cruelty, yet ſhe thought her crimes would be obſcured by the virtues of her ſon, ſo true is that obſervation of the moraliſt: "That although people are ever ſo "wicked, yet they don't deſire their children to "copy after their example." Some of the aſtrologers, of which there were many in Rome, often told her that if ever her ſon was emperor, he would put her to death; but all the anſwer ſhe made was, "That let her ſon be emperor, and death would "be welcome to her under any ſhape whatever."

But notwithſtanding the abſolute authority with which ſhe ruled both the emperor and empire, yet ſhe was not without ſuſpicion that her own perſon was in danger. Claudius was one night at ſupper heard to ſay, "that it was his misfortune to receive "ſuch wives that he was obliged to ſee them put "to death." Agrippina, who was preſent when he uttered theſe words, reſolved to take a moſt cruel revenge, and, therefore, to facilitate her purpoſe ſhe procured an order, by which Narciſſus was baniſhed. Claudius was now wholly in her power, and as ſhe did not know how ſoon he might make choice of another favourite, ſhe reſolved

ſolved to loſe no time till he was removed out of the way.

The emperor was extremely fond of muſhrooms, and therefore ſhe employed one Locuſta, a woman of an abandoned character, to mix poiſon with ſuch as he ſhould eat; but the ſtrength of his conſtitution baffled all her attempts, till his phyſician, being bribed for the purpoſe, thruſt a poiſoned feather down his throat, and he died after a mean and inglorious reign.

With reſpect to the character of Claudius, it will be beſt known from the foregoing narrative. Every virtue ſeems to have forſaken Rome, except in the perſons of a few individuals, but for all that, the terror of their arms was not in the leaſt diminiſhed in the provinces where many of the generals acquired new laurels, and added new conqueſts to the empire. Weak and diſpirited as the emperor was, yet Rome was the greateſt ſufferer, for upon the inhabitants of that city he had a more eaſy opportunity of wreaking his vengeance, than upon ſuch as lived at a diſtance.

However neceſſary it is in hiſtory to record the vices as well as the virtues of men, yet the former is always diſagreeable to a mind enlivened with the principles of benevolence. We could wiſh to ſee human nature free from blame, but unhappily we are obliged to take notice of its dark as well as its fair ſide, and this will be verified in our account of the reign of Nero.

Agrippina, who had hitherto acted with ſo much diſſimulation, concealed the death of the emperor till ſhe had brought over to her party, Burrhus, the prefect of the pretorian bands, and then ſhe ordered him, with her ſon A. D. 54.

Nero, to iſſue forth from the gates of the palace, to receive the congratulations of the people and the army. The crowd gathered round him, and after carrying him in triumph to the head of the cohorts, he was proclaimed emperor, and his title was recognized and acknowledged by the ſenate. This was done in ſo ſudden a manner, that although the people wiſhed well to young Germanicus, yet they ſeemed to have forgot that he was now in the power of Agrippina, who would probably not loſe ſo favourable an opportunity of deſtroying him.

The emperor Claudius was interred in the ſame ſplendid manner as Auguſtus, and although little better than an idiot, yet ſuch was the meanneſs, or rather the madneſs of the people, that they ranked him among the gods, and actually paid him divine honours. Seneca drew up a funeral oration in praiſe of ſuch virtues as Claudius had been an utter ſtranger to, and it was delivered by Nero, and received with the utmoſt applauſe by the people, who imagined it his own.

Agrippina, who by her crimes had raiſed her ſon to the throne, for ſome time managed all the affairs of ſtate; and Nero ſubmitted to her in the moſt dutiful manner, ſo that although he had the name of emperor, yet he had not the power. Indeed, it was improper that it ſhould have been intruſted with him, for he was only ſeventeen years of age, and utterly unacquainted with the world.

That cruelty which had diſgraced the former part of Agrippina's life, was ſtill her ruling paſſion, for ſoon after the death of Claudius, ſhe cauſed Silanus, the proconſul of Aſia, to be murdered, becauſe it was inſinuated by one of her favourites, that he had ſpoken diſreſpectfully of her. Nor did ſhe ſtop there, for Narciſſus, the favourite of the late emperor,

was

was obliged to put an end to his own life, to avoid the hands of the executioner. Seneca and Burrhus, who had ſtill ſome virtue remaining in them, did all they could to put a ſtop to thoſe horrid cruelties, but as nothing could be done without the ſanction of the young emperor, they reſolved to bring him over to their party, and ſet him at the head of public affairs. This ſucceeded according to their wiſhes, and the young emperor ſeemed to coincide ſo far with their determinations, that the affairs of government were conducted to the ſatisfaction of the people, upon principles conſiſtent with the natural rights of mankind; ſo far Nero concealed the natural depravity of his heart; but while he was doing ſo, his paſſions were gaining ground, and only wanted a proper opportunity to diſplay themſelves.

Indeed, ſo great was the affability and condeſcenſion of Nero to all thoſe who ſolicited him for favours, that the Romans began to look upon themſelves as the moſt happy people in the world. When any of the ſenators flattered him, he ſeemed very uneaſy, and deſired them not to praiſe him till ſuch time as his conduct ſhould entitle him to ſuch marks of their eſteem. He would often ſhed tears when he ſigned warrants for the execution of criminals, nor did the leaſt ſpirit of cruelty appear in his nature.

His mother Agrippina finding her power on the decline, loſt all manner of patience, for ſuch was her natural ambition, that ſooner than be controuled in any of her actions, ſhe would have ſeen the whole world deſtroyed. Nero had placed his affections on a young handſome ſlave named Acte, whom he had made free, and as Agrippina did every thing in her power to croſs his inclinations, he reſolved to

break

break with her altogether, and aſſert his rights as emperor. He even went ſo far as to turn her chief favourite Pallas out of employment, on ſuſpicion that he fomented diviſions in the palace. This was what Agrippina could not bear, and therefore ſetting no bounds to her rage, ſhe threatened to raiſe a party to diſplace her ſon, and ſet Britannicus on the throne. Nero, knowing that her genius for intrigue was equal to her malice, cauſed the young prince Germanicus to be poiſoned, and thus the principal obſtacle to his ſafety was removed out of the way.

Nor did he ſtop here, for finding that his mother was endeavouring to raiſe a faction againſt him in the city, he ordered her to remove from the palace, and took her guards from her. All ſuſpicious perſons were forbidden, under the ſevereſt penalties, to viſit her, ſo that ſhe was little better than a priſoner. Deprived of power, all her favourites forſook her, and made their peace with the emperor, who freely forgave all that had been alledged againſt them. Such in general is the fate of all thoſe who are ſlaves to ambition; for although they are ſure of finding more friends than are neceſſary when in proſperity, yet no ſooner do they fall into diſgrace, than they are forſaken, and left a prey to melancholy and deſpair.

Nero was now advancing to a ſtate of manhood, and his natural diſpoſition that had been hitherto concealed under the maſk of virtue, began to diſplay itſelf in its native colours. His attendants in the palace made his paſſions ſubſervient to their own intereſt, and they took no notice of his moſt vicious actions, while he continued to load them with favours. In the evenings, he would diſguiſe himſelf in the habit of a ſlave, and go into the ſtreets to viſit

viſit the moſt noted brothels, where all manner of lewdneſs was committed. Had this been confined to his own perſonal conduct, the evil would have been the more eaſily borne with; but his example firſt diffuſed itſelf among the young nobility, and from them to all ranks of people, ſo that a univerſal depravity in manners took place in the city. Both ſexes forgot the regard they owed to modeſty and decency, while the laws were diſregarded and trampled on.

While Rome, from the example of the emperor, became a ſcene of riot and debauchery, the provinces in general remained quiet, only ſome few inſurrections that were quelled without much loſs; for the Roman arms were ſtill for the moſt part victorious. But things now began to aſſume a new form, and the vices of Nero became more conſpicuous than ever. He repudiated his wife Octavia, and married Poppea, a woman of a looſe character, but one who ſeemed to ſuit herſelf to all his vices.

Agrippina, who was an enemy to Poppea, repined in ſecret at her advancement to ſuch dignity, and left nothing undone to compleat her ruin, but all her ſchemes proved abortive, and the intended miſchief turned upon herſelf.

Poppea began to acquire an aſcendancy over Nero, which is not to be wondered at, as ſhe was poſſeſſed of all the arts peculiar to her ſex, and extremely beautiful in her perſon. She told Nero that he could never be ſafe while his mother was ſo near his perſon, and that he ought to ſend her to ſome diſtant province, where ſhe would not have it in her power to do any further miſchief, by diſturbing his tranquillity, and creating diſſentions among the people. Finding Nero not averſe in the leaſt to comply with her requeſt, ſhe doubted not

of

of obtaining a ſure victory, and therefore we find the emperor employing ſome of his minions to ſcandalize his mother in the moſt public manner, and to commence vexatious law-ſuits againſt her. But although this mortified her pride, and put her to a conſiderable expence, yet ſhe maintained a ſpirit of fortitude ſuperior to what might have been expected from one of ſo diſſolute a life.

Nero, finding all his attempts unſucceſsful to depreſs the ſpirit of his mother, reſolved to take her off by poiſon, but her jealouſy of what ſhe had reaſon to expect, prevented her from taſting any thing which ſhe ſuſpected poiſonous. It was then propoſed that ſhe ſhould remove to Calabria, with which ſhe complied, and the ſailors in their voyage thither had orders to drown her; but although ſhe was thrown into the ſea, yet ſhe continued ſwimming till ſhe was taken up by ſome trading veſſels.

Nothing could ſet bounds to the rage of the emperor, when he found that his mother was ſtill alive, and ſtimulated by the continual importunities of Poppea, he reſolved that ſhe ſhould be put to death in a private manner. To give colour to ſo baſe a crime, he got it inſinuated by ſome of his dependants, that ſhe had a deſign againſt his life, and conſulted Seneca and Burrhus in what manner to act. Seneca made no anſwer, but Burrhus, regardleſs of his own perſonal ſafety, boldly anſwered, "That there was not a man in the army that would "ever have it imputed to him, that he had ſhed the "blood of one deſcended from Cæſar." Nero was diſconcerted, but to relieve him from all his fears, Anicetus, who had been employed to drown Agrippina, ſtood up and offered his ſervices to perform the emperor's orders. His offer was immediately accepted,

accepted, and taking with him a party of the guards, he ſurrounded the houſe of Agrippina, who had no thoughts of her life being in ſuch imminent danger.

The time was now come that this woman ſhould pay the debt of her crimes, but diſſimulation, which had always marked her character, continued with her even to the laſt. Anicetus having ſeized on her ſlaves who attended her, went with two ſoldiers into her chamber, where they found her ſitting in a ſeeming careleſs manner. She knew that they were come to deſtroy her, but aſſuming an air of indifference, told them, that if they came to enquire after her health, ſhe was much better than ſhe had been for ſome time, but if they had any bad intentions, ſhe was willing to ſubmit to it from them rather than from the hand of her ſon.

She had ſcarce done ſpeaking, when one of the ſoldiers ſtruck her on the head, and Anicetus drawing his ſword, ſhe pointed her boſom to him, telling him to ſtab her there, as that boſom had nouriſhed a monſter; ſhe was immediately diſpatched, and next day Nero made a ſpeech in the ſenate, vindicating his own conduct, by telling them, that he was under an abſolute neceſſity, either of putting her to death, or ſuffering himſelf to be deſtroyed by the ſchemes ſhe had hatched. Many ridiculous ſtories have been inſerted in the writings of the Roman hiſtorians concerning this barbarous action, as how Nero went and viewed the mangled body of his mother, and taking notice to thoſe who attended him, that he did not imagine ſhe was ſuch a fine woman; but theſe ſeem to be mere exaggerations, for which there was no manner of reaſon, for Nero was guilty of too many real crimes, without adding to them ſuch as were imaginary.

Every

Every obſtacle being now removed out of the way, Nero proceeded to greater lengths in wickedneſs than he had hitherto attempted, One would have thought that his actions had already been as diſgraceful as one would expect to meet with in hiſtory; but for all that, he was only in the infancy of his crimes. His fondneſs even for the ſofteſt pleaſures did not diveſt him of cruelty, for he joined both together in ſuch a manner, that while he enjoyed the one, he ſought after the other. He even exhibited in perſon at the public games, contrary to the advice of his beſt friends, and his paſſion for muſic was ſo great, that although not a maſter of it, yet he attempted to play on all ſorts of inſtruments. He had read the poets, and he imagined he could excel the moſt celebrated among them, but his natural indolence prevented him from ſtudy. Some court ſycophants compoſed rhymes, which he repeated in public as his own, and although moſt of them were beneath contempt itſelf, yet there were not wanting many about his perſon who repeated them as ſuperior to any thing written, either by Homer or Virgil. Such in general is the fate of weak and vicious princes; they ſeldom ſee with their own eyes, and being blinded by their pride and other ungovernable paſſions, they ſhut their eyes to the truth, and freedom is conſidered by them as little better than treaſon. Confined to their palaces among thoſe who for their own intereſt are obliged to flatter their groſſeſt crimes; they remain in a ſtate of ignorance, nor are their characters known till hiſtory ſtrips off the maſk.

LETTER

## LETTER XLIV.

NERO, who had hitherto continued to grow in the practice of the moſt abandoned crimes, conſidered Rome as too contracted a ſcene for him to appear in. Deſtitute of ſelf-knowledge, he looked upon himſelf as an object that ought to claim the ſole attention of nations as well as of individuals.

Infatuated by ſuch notions, he reſolved to viſit the moſt celebrated places in the empire, and accordingly ſet out for Naples. There he exhibited in public as a ſinger, and that he might procure the public applauſe, he bribed the moſt inſignificant, and by his menaces prevented the moſt celebrated performers from coming on the ſtage. Indeed, the whole of his conduct was of ſo ridiculous, and ſuch an unheard-of nature, that the people began to look upon him with the utmoſt contempt.

Having thus made himſelf ridiculous to every ſober, ſenſible perſon in Naples, he reſolved to viſit Greece. He was induced to undertake this romantic journey in conſequence of ſome Greek ambaſſadors, who having been with him at Rome, deſired to hear him ſing, and although they knew him to be deſtitute of any knowledge in muſic, yet they were crafty and inſinuating enough to tell him that he excelled the moſt celebrated performers on the Grecian ſtage.

This flattering declaration, as abſurd as falſe, made Nero declare that the Greeks alone were judges of real merit, and therefore he ſet out for that celebrated country, where he ſpent upwards of a whole year. While he remained in Greece, he exhibited at the Olympic games, by driving a chariot

chariot with ten horſes, but his conſtitution was too feeble by effeminacy to ſuſtain ſo violent a motion, ſo that he was thrown from his ſeat.

His rank, however, procured him that applauſe which his merit could never have entitled him to, and in the ſame manner he was crowned conqueror at all the other games. One day a celebrated ſinger happened to oppoſe him, but whatever might be his merit, certain it is, he had not too large a ſhare of prudence, for the tyrant cauſed one of the ſoldiers to ſtab him dead in the theatre. Leaving Greece, he returned to Naples, and conſiſtent with the manner of honouring thoſe who exhibited at the Olympic games, and had been crowned conquerors, he entered the city through a breach made in the wall. At Rome he was met by all ranks of people, ſome thouſands of ſlaves followed the chariot of Auguſtus, in which he rode, and the whole ſtreets of the city were ſtrewed with flowers; ſo much were the Roman people ſunk beneath the dignity of their anceſtors.

Theſe ridiculous diverſions, however, although beneath the dignity of a rational creature, and much more that of an emperor, were but trifles when compared to his moſt horrid cruelties. Neither virtue nor fidelity could preſerve the moſt reſpectable characters from deſtruction, for his own guilt made him ſuſpicious of every one, and his cruelty was ſuch, that if once accuſed, though ever ſo falſly, they had no reaſon to expect the leaſt mercy. All his mother's favourites were put to death along with Domitia, his aunt, and ſeveral Roman ſenators, although nothing of a criminal nature was proved againſt them; but tyrants are never in want of excuſes to colour over their moſt odious crimes.

Octavia

Octavia was put to death on ſuſpicion of her having conſpired againſt him, and Poppea, who had long been miſtreſs of his affections, was declared empreſs in the moſt ſolemn manner. A.D. 63 From crimes that may be committed conſiſtent with the corruption of nature, he launched into thoſe that were unnatural, and juſtly held in abomination by every perſon who wiſhes well to ſociety. He dreſſed himſelf in the habit of a woman, and beſides committing ſuch crimes as ought not to be mentioned, he became ſtill more deteſtable, by keeping a youth whom he had ordered to be caſtrated, and whom he obliged the people to honour with the name of his wife, ſo loſt was he to all ſenſe of ſhame and decency.

In company with this youth, he appeared in all public places, and in the ſight of the people, treated him as if he had been a woman. Many ſarcaſms were thrown out upon him by the wits of thoſe times, ſome of whom obſerved, that it would have been happy for the world, had the emperor's father had ſuch a wife as he had made choice of. He did not deſire reſpect, much leſs the affections of the people, but choſe rather to be hated than loved.

Of this he gave a moſt ſhocking inſtance, for the city was ſet on fire, and almoſt reduced to aſhes, and according to the teſtimonies of moſt hiſtorians, it was done by the emperor's orders. No perſon was permitted to aſſiſt the ſufferers, and as the Chriſtians were then numerous in Rome, a report was induſtriouſly ſpread, that they were the incendiaries. This occaſioned a moſt cruel perſecution againſt thoſe innocent people, not only in Rome, but likewiſe throughout many of the provinces. Some of them were crucified in imitation of their divine maſter, others were chained to ſtakes and burnt alive,

alive, and many were cloathed in ſkins of wild beaſts and devoured by dogs kept hungry for that purpoſe, while the emperor, from the window of his palace, beheld theſe horrid cruelties with a ſavage pleaſure, (if that can be called pleaſure that muſt always be ſhocking to human nature.) Among thoſe who ſuffered death was the Apoſtle Paul, who, becauſe he was a Roman, was only beheaded: according to Euſebius, St. Peter was crucified with his head downwards; but this part is doubtful, for we are not certain that he ever was at Rome.

While he was going on in this manner, a conſpiracy was formed againſt him by Piſo, a Roman nobleman, who beheld his fellow-citizens treated worſe than if they had been dogs. The conſpiracy being almoſt ripe for execution, it was diſcovered by one Voluſius, a tribune, who had received an account of it from Epicharies, a courtezan. The chiefs of the conſpirators were immediately ſeized and put to the torture, upon which Natalis confeſſed his guilt, and accuſed ſeveral of his accomplices. Among thoſe apprehended on that fatal affair was Lucan the poet, who gave in a liſt of many innocent perſons as guilty, among whom was his own mother, Attilia. Many of thoſe innocent perſons were put to the rack; and as Epicharies had inadvertently diſcovered the plot, ſhe was tortured in the cruelleſt manner, but nothing could force any confeſſion from her; for it muſt be remembered that ſhe had firſt diſcovered the affair to Voluſius, the tribune, thinking that he would be thereby brought into the conſpiracy. This woman with a fortitude ſuperior to the weakneſs of her ſex, declared, that if they ſhould continue their torture to the laſt, ſhe would not accuſe her friends, and

next

next night ſhe ſtrangled herſelf in the priſon. Seneca the great philoſopher was accuſed of being concerned in this conſpiracy, and although there was not the leaſt proof of his guilt, yet he was ordered to chuſe his own death, which was executed by opening the veins of his legs and arms. His wife attempted to imitate him, but after ſhe had bled ſome time, her ſervants prevented her from going any further.

Seneca met death with that fortitude that might have been expected in ſo great a man; and during his laſt agonies he dictated a diſcourſe on immortality to his ſecretary, but unhappily it has not been tranſmitted to us. Lucan ſuffered in the ſame manner, and when he found himſelf growing weak with the loſs of blood, he repeated about ten lines of his poem, called Pharſalia, and then expired with the utmoſt compoſure.

While theſe cruelties were daily practiſing, thoſe who lived in the provinces were not in a much better condition. The Parthians revolted on account of ſome ſeverities they had ſuffered from the Romans, but after ſeveral engagements they were again obliged to ſubmit to ſuch terms as Nero thought proper to grant them.

The governors in the provinces were found to have been equally cruel with their maſter, for the Jews were oppreſſed in ſuch a manner that they took up arms, upon which, ſeveral legions were ſent to oppoſe them. Indeed the deſtruction of that unhappy people, as foretold by our Saviour, was now approaching, but as it was not completed in this reign, I ſhall take more notice of it afterwards.

But of all thoſe who ſuffered under Nero in the provinces, the Britons had the largeſt ſhare. Paulinus

linus was then governor in this iſland, and ſome of his tribunes having treated Boadicia, queen of the Iceni, with the utmoſt indignity, ſhe raiſed an army and deſtroyed the cities of London and Verulum, cauſing all the Romans that fell into her hands to be murdered. Paulinus was then in a diſtant part of the iſland; but no ſooner had he heard of the revolt of the Britons, than he haſtened againſt them, and a moſt bloody battle enſued, in which the Romans were victorious. Seventy thouſand of the Britons were left dead on the ſpot, and Boadicia, who could not endure the loſs of her honour, put an end to her own life.

A. D. 66. Nero ſeemed as if his ſole intention had been to deſtroy every man endowed with merit or virtue in Rome, and the number of celebrated perſons who fell victims to his cruelty would ſeem incredible were it not atteſted by the evidence of Tacitus, and many other grave hiſtorians, who lived in or near thoſe periods. Poppea, the Empreſs, either having done or ſaid ſomething to diſpleaſe him, he gave her ſo violent a kick on the belly that it brought on an abortion, and put an end to her life.

His crimes were now grown to ſuch an enormous height that he ſeemed ripe for deſtruction, and to bring about an event ſo apparently beneficial to the empire; the provinces ſeemed unanimous in extirpating from the world a wretch, who was a diſgrace to human nature in its moſt corrupted ſtate. Julius Vindex, who commanded the legions in Gaul, declared that he would no longer bear with the oppreſſive conduct of the emperor, and actually offered leave for any man to cut off his own head, upon condition they ſhould bring him that of Nero. He courted the aſſiſtance of Sergius Galba, who commanded

commanded in Spain, but he was rather fearful leſt their attempt ſhould have no better ſucceſs than that undertaken by Piſo.

But although an account of thoſe dangerous combinations were tranſmitted to Nero, yet he was ſo loſt in ſenſuality, that he paid no regard to them, all he wiſhed for being only an opportunity of ſeeing ſome new public inſurrection, and enjoying the treaſures that would ariſe from the ſale of the conſpirators effects. But to complete his ruin, news was brought him that Galba had joined in the conſpiracy, upon which he was ſo overpowered with ſurprize and grief that he fainted away while ſitting at ſupper with his favourites. He had no ſooner recovered than he raged like a madman, crying out that now he was undone, and threatened to turn out the wild beaſts to deſtroy ſuch of the citizens as came in their way.

His whole hopes were centered in Virginius Rufus, who commanded an army in Germany, and he having made an incurſion into Gaul, Vindex was defeated and there laid violent hands on himſelf. But Nero's hopes ſoon vaniſhed, upon which he reſolved to ſeek ſhelter in Egypt. For that purpoſe he ordered a fleet to be fitted out at Oſtia, but moſt of his friends refuſed to accompany him.

In that diſtracted ſituation, not knowing what to do, he went to ſleep, but when he awoke, he found himſelf deſerted by his ſoldiers, who had gone off in a body, and proclaimed Galba emperor. Nero left the palace in a ſtate of deſpair, and mounted on horſeback, reſolved to ſhelter himſelf in the houſe of one of his domeſtics, about four miles from Rome, where he ſtabbed himſelf in the throat, and expired juſt as the ſoldiers who had been ſent after him arrived.

The

The characters of princes are beſt known by their actions, and few ever diſgraced human nature more than Nero. He was only in his thirty ſecond year when he died, and although his reign did not amount to fourteen years, yet he committed more crimes than would have diſgraced a reign of a thouſand. He had a vain head and a corrupt heart. He had no pleaſure in any thing that could procure him either honour or reſpect, and as he lived hated, ſo he died unlamented, or rather his death was conſidered as one of the happieſt events that could have taken place.

A. D. 69. Galba, now upwards of ſeventy years of age, was on his march towards Rome, when he heard an account of the defeat and death of Vindex, which, in a great meaſure damped his ſpirits, and made him wiſh that the ſoldiers would relinquiſh the choice they had made of him to be emperor, and give that honour to another. He was grown old in the ſervice of the commonwealth, and would have rather ended his life in the camp, than embarraſs himſelf in the affairs of government, to which he was almoſt a ſtranger. But while he was deliberating in his mind what to do, he received the agreeable news that Nero was dead, and continuing his march towards Rome was met by many of the nobility, who all acknowledged him emperor, and promiſed to yield him the moſt implicit obedience, among whom were the chief favourites of the late emperor, who, by courting the favour of Galba, thought to ſcreen themſelves from juſtice.

Galba was one of the moſt unfit perſons to govern the empire that poſſibly could have been found;

found; and although he was raiſed to the purple by the ſoldiers, yet he began his reign by doing all in his power to diſoblige them. A numerous body of ſailors, whom Nero had incorporated with the legions, came forward to meet him near Rome, and demanded a confirmation of the privileges he had conferred on them. Galba refuſing to give them a ſatisfactory anſwer, they proceeded to threats, upon which he ordered a body of cavalry to attack them, and ſeven thouſand were left dead on the ſpot.

This did not ſo much diſpleaſe the army becauſe they hated the ſailors, but his next act gave them more offence, although it was not attended with ſo much cruelty. The former emperors, in order to protect their perſons from conſpiracies, had kept a guard of German cohorts: but although nothing could be alledged againſt them, yet they were ſent home to their own country, in a ſtarving condition, without receiving their legal wages.

Accuſtomed to the hardſhips of war, and long inured to camps, where few delicacies are known, he reſolved to reform the Romans from that ſtate of luxury into which they were ſunk; but this part of his conduct was too violently begun to have the deſired ſucceſs, or be attended with any beneficial conſequences. The citizens reported him as a ſlave to avarice, and becauſe he lived in the moſt frugal manner, ſatires were daily publiſhed, ridiculing his conduct, and in a ſhort time he loſt all that popularity which had formerly marked his character.

Avarice, however, was not the only vice imputed to Galba, for ſoon after he had taken upon him the government, he ordered Patronicus, Locuſta, Elius, and Polycletus, to be led in chains

through the city, and then to be executed in public. It is true thoſe men had made themſelves odious to the people, but cruelty is not the act of a generous mind. Many of the Romans who hated their crimes, yet pitied their ſufferings; but that which encreaſed their indignation more than any thing was, that Tigelinus, Nero's chief favourite, eſcaped along with Helotus a ſlave, and a eunuch, who had both purchaſed their pardon with money.

Galba ſinking under the decay of nature, committed the office of adminiſtration to three men of the moſt abandoned characters, who did every thing in their power to oppreſs the people. Caius Laco, præfect of the prætorian guards, Icelus, his freed man, and Titus Venius, who had acted as his lieutenant, in Spain, were the favourites in whom he placed all his confidence.

Theſe men being of tempers and diſpoſitions totally oppoſite to each other, led the emperor to diſannul one day what he had done the preceding, ſo that his character became truly ridiculous. All puniſhments, fines, and impriſonments were decided by the favourites, according to their different inclinations, offices of honour and profit were ſold to thoſe who bid moſt for them, and the moſt notorious criminal could eſcape juſtice if he had only money ſufficient to purchaſe his pardon.

Nor was it much better in the provinces, eſpecially among the ſoldiers, who looked with envy upon Galba, becauſe he had been raiſed to the empire by thoſe under his command in Spain, without ſoliciting the countenance of ſuch as were in other parts. Such as were then in Germany ſent notice to the prætorian bands, that they would never acknowledge an emperor who had been choſen without

out their conſent, and inſiſted that the ſenate ſhould proceed to a new election.

This was an alarming circumſtance to Galba, whoſe ignorance of government, and the infirmities of old age, rendered incapable of acting becoming his dignity. He had no children of his own, and therefore, in order to quell the fears and jealouſies of the people, as well as thoſe of the army, he reſolved, conſiſtent with the Roman method, to adopt one.

This meaſure occaſioned a private conſultation among his favourites, who each had ſeparate intereſts, and what was propoſed by the one was oppoſed by the others.

After much altercation, Galba made choice of Piſo to be his heir, a man poſſeſſed of all thoſe qualities requiſite to diſcharge the duties of a Roman emperor; nor was he leſs engaging in his manners as a private man than celebrated for his knowledge of public affairs. But the manners of the people as well as the ſoldiers and ſenators, were ſo corrupted, that they ſeemed unanimous in their diſapprobation of the choice, becauſe they had not been bribed in the uſual manner.

While affairs were conducted in this manner at Rome, the ſoldiers in the different provinces were entering into combinations to ſet their reſpective commanders on the throne. The election of Galba had ſet them an example, and the ſenate was only regarded in name.

Otho had done every thing in his power to be adopted by Galba, as his ſucceſſor; but finding he could not ſucceed, he had recourſe to the ſoldiers, with whom he was a favourite. His circumſtances were deſperate, for he had ſpent moſt of his fortune in prodigality; but having by the aſſiſtance of ſome

friends raiſed a conſiderable ſum of money, he corrupted by bribery a great part of the ſoldiers, taking care at the ſame time to make them promiſes of large rewards if they ſtood by him.

He addreſſed himſelf to them in a ſpeech compoſed for the occaſion, ſetting forth all the cruelties that had been committed by Galba, and pointing out the neceſſity they were under to proceed to the choice of a new emperor. The ſoldiers, whom he had already prepared for his purpoſe, immediately took him upon their ſhoulders, and carried him in triumph to the camp, where they proclaimed him emperor. Galba hearing what was done in the camp, dreſſed himſelf in his armour, and at the head of a body of cavalry, ruſhed into the forum, where he was met by a party of thoſe ſent from Otho, who ſtruck off his head, and carried it on a pole as a trophy to their commander.

Such was the end of Galba, a man properly qualified to command an army, but utterly unfit for governing an empire. Had he died in the camp, his memory would have been treated with honour, but all his former virtues were obſcured, by entruſting the affairs of government to favourites, whoſe minds were attached to vice, and who had no regard for the intereſts of the republic. He had ſerved from his moſt early youth in the army, and was reſpected by the ſoldiers; but a ſhort reign of ſeven months has tranſmitted his name to poſterity with infamy.

A. D. 69. On this occaſion the Romans gave a ſtriking proof of the corruption into which all ranks of them had ſunk, for from the ſenators down to the loweſt among the citizens, each ſtrove to be firſt to the camp, to acknowledge Otho as emperor. So fluctuating are the minds of the people,

people, and ſo little regard ought to be paid to the applauſes of the multitude, unleſs a conſciouſneſs of virtue remains in the breaſt of the perſon who is the object of it.

Otho was not inſenſible of the neceſſity he was under to court the applauſes of the people, and therefore, in order to give them a ſtriking proof of his clemency, his firſt public act was to grant a pardon to Marius Celſus, a perſon whom Galba had repoſed the utmoſt confidence in.

Nay, he even loaded him with honours, and advanced him to a place of great truſt and profit, taking notice that his fidelity to his maſter deſerved ſuch rewards. Nor did he ſtop here, for finding the public clamour riſing high againſt Tigellinus, the favourite of Nero, and the inſtrument of all his cruelties, he was put to death in the moſt public manner, and all thoſe who had been unjuſtly baniſhed, were reſtored to their families and poſſeſſions But all thoſe acts, by which he ſtrove to procure public favour, could not ſupport him on the throne.. A dangerous precedent had been ſet to the ſoldiers by the election of Galba, and mutual jealouſy took place in the army.

Vitellius, who commanded in the Lower Germany, had acquired the good will of the legions under his command, and therefore they publicly proclaimed him emperor, without any regard to the approbation of the ſenate. News of this being tranſmitted to Rome, Otho was ſenſibly affected thereby; for whatever might have been his vices while in a private ſtation, certain it is, that as ſoon as he was raiſed to the purple, a reformation ſeemed to take place in the whole of his conduct; nor did he deſire any thing ſuperior to that of promoting

the intereſts of the republic, and making the people happy.

He lamented to think his country was again to be involved in a civil war, at a time when he intended to rectify every abuſe, and put an end to civil diſſentions. For that purpoſe he ſent deputies to Vitellius, propoſing terms of accommodation; but all his offers being rejected, both parties propoſed to take the field.

Vitellius continued his march to Italy, and Otho ſet out to meet him at the head of a numerous army, but ſuch of the ſenators and knights, from whom he had reaſon to expect advice and aſſiſtance, were too much ſunk in luxury to pay any regard to the intereſts of their country.

Otho was ſenſible of his diſtreſſed circumſtances; for although his army was numerous, yet few of them were acquainted with military diſcipline, and thoſe whom they were to oppoſe, had been long accuſtomed to all the hardſhips of the camp. Superſtition, likewiſe, operated on his mind in ſo forcible a manner, that he was frightened in his dreams, and the moſt trifling incident appeared as a fatal omen. But ſtill he did all in his power to conceal the dejection that hung upon his countenance, and therefore marched towards the city of Brixellum, near the river Po. There he remained, ſending the army before him, under the command of his two lieutenants, Celſus and Suetonius, to oppoſe Valus and Cecina, whom Vitellius had ordered to march againſt him while he remained in Gaul, collecting as many forces as he could raiſe.

LETTER

## LETTER XLV.

THE people waited with impatience to ſee the event of a battle which was to decide the fate of the contending parties, and both armies met with ſuch reſolution as if their intention had been either to conquer or die. Several attacks were made by the detached parties of both ſides, but there being a neceſſity that both ſhould come to a general engagement, Otho put himſelf at the head of his forces, near a ſmall village called Bebriacum, where he called his officers together, in order to hear their opinions concerning the moſt proper methods for him to take.

Thoſe who were moſt experienced in military affairs, propoſed to keep fighting in detached parties, in order to diſtreſs the enemy as much as poſſible; but their opinion was violently oppoſed by the young Romans, whoſe impatience was equal to their imprudence, and who thought themſelves ſure of victory, becauſe of their numbers.

Whether Otho was a man of perſonal courage does not appear, but either by the advice of his favourites, or by his own deſire, he retired to Brixellum, while his generals were making proper diſpoſitions to engage. The field of battle was the worſt that could have been made choice of; for many trees grew upon it; but at firſt Otho's men broke through the firſt line, and took the eagle from the enemy, and this was looked upon as a favourable omen, if not a ſure preſage of victory. But theſe hopes ſoon vaniſhed, for the legions who had fought under Vitellius, were well acquainted with diſcipline, and as they had been long inured to

hardſhip, they ſoon became maſters of the field, while Otho's men fled in great confuſion, and a moſt dreadful ſlaughter enſued.

The news of the defeat of the army was brought him by a common ſoldier, who had eſcaped from the purſuers; but his flatterers endeavoured to perſuade him that the fellow had only fled to ſave himſelf, upon which the brave ſoldier fell upon his ſword and killed himſelf. The emperor was ſtruck with the courage of the ſoldier, and now he began to find that he had been fed with falſe hopes, by thoſe who pretended to be his friends.

He then addreſſed himſelf to his favourites, and told them, that ever ſince he had been advanced to the purple, his ſole ambition had been to make the people happy; but as it was evident fortune was againſt him, he was willing to ſubmit to his fate like a Roman, and not bring any diſhonour upon his family or country. He adviſed them to make their peace with Vitellius, and not continue in arms, leſt he ſhould be provoked to take a cruel revenge.

Having done ſpeaking, he retired to his chamber, where he wrote two letters to his ſiſter, and one to Meſſalina, a young lady, to whom he was to have been married, had he returned victorious. He burnt all ſuch letters as by falling into the enemy's hands, might be an injury to his friends, and then reſolved to die by his own ſword. At that inſtant, a tumult ariſing among the ſoldiers, he went out among them in order to accommodate matters, which having effected, he retired to his chamber, and lay down to ſleep with a ſharpened dagger under his pillow. About day-break he awoke, and ſeizing the dagger, ſtabbed himſelf under his left ſide, and ended his life without a groan, after a ſhort reign of three months and five days. With reſpect to his character, it

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was of a very abandoned nature, while he lived in a private ſtation, but ſhort as his reign was, great hopes were conceived of him, and there is reaſon to think, that had he lived longer, he would have been an ornament and honour to his country.

The ſoldiers who had fought under the emperor Otho, finding themſelves without a head, went and begged that Virginius, the commander of the German legions, would intercede with Vitellius in their favour; but he not chuſing to comply with their requeſt, they put themſelves under the command of Rubrius Gallus, a perſon of great merit, who prevailed upon Vitellius to grant them a free pardon. In the mean time the ſenate, who always took part with ſuch as were victorious, acknowledged Vitellius as emperor; but they had ſoon reaſon to repent of their conduct; for the ſoldiers under his command committed the moſt horrid outrages on the people of Italy, whom they conſidered as their enemies. The decree of the ſenate having been tranſmitted to Vitellius, who was yet in Gaul, he gave a ſtriking inſtance of his cruelty, by diſarming the prætorian cohorts, and putting to death one hundred and fifty of them, who had been active in ſome late diſturbances. He then ſet out for Rome, attended by a numerous retinue, and as he paſſed through the different towns, he made the moſt ſplendid appearance. When he came to the field where Otho's army was defeated, and ſaw the putrified carcaſes of men and horſes, whoſe ſmell was ſufficient to have created an infection, he ſeemed greatly pleaſed, and calling for wine, drank of it, and ordered ſome to be given to his ſoldiers. A. D. 70.

He entered into the city of Rome in a manner different from thoſe who had before worn the purple,

for he looked upon the whole empire as his own by conqueſt. Cuſtom obliged him to go to the ſenate, but although he pretended to thank them for chuſing him emperor, yet the greateſt part of his ſpeech was taken up in ſetting off his many ſervices to the republic, and though without a title, yet he had a right to govern in preference to all others.

The ſoldiers who had fought under him in Gaul and Germany, had been inured to ſo many hardſhips, that the pleaſures of Rome, to which they gave themſelves up in the moſt licentious manner, rendered them utterly unfit for war, while all offices of truſt or profit were given to ſuch time-ſerving wretches as flattered the emperor's vanity. Indeed, Vitellius ſet the example to his ſoldiers, for he gave ſuch a looſe to debauchery, that he was continually drunk, and every day was ſpent in one entertainment or other. Such as could invent any ſpecies of new luxury was ſure to obtain a large ſhare of his favour, and rewards were heaped upon thoſe who ought to have been made examples of public juſtice.

At one entertainment provided for him by his brother, who ſeems to have been as voluptuous a wretch as himſelf, there were ſeven thouſand fowls and two thouſand fiſhes of all ſorts that could be found, beſides many other dainties, too ridiculous to be mentioned. Nay, we are told by ſome hiſtorians, that had he lived much longer, the whole empire would not have been ſufficient to ſupport his extravagance; but his unbounded liberality brought on want; for his needy favourites were continually ſoliciting him for a ſhare of the public money, and as he conſidered himſelf as ſtill at the head of the army, ſo he continued to grant all their requeſts.

If any perſon to whom he had been formerly indebted came to demand the money due to them, they were

they were ſure to be put to death. One of thoſe unfortunate perſons being ſummoned before him for having demanded a debt due to him, his two ſons came to intercede for him, but the emperor, inſtead of paying any regard to what they urged in behalf of their father, ordered all three to be put to death. At another time, when one of the Roman knights was condemned to ſuffer, he told the emperor that he had made him his heir, upon which Vitellius demanded to ſee the will, and finding another perſon joined with him as co-heir, both were inſtantly put to death, that he might enjoy the whole.

Such inhuman actions made him an object of deteſtation to every perſon who wiſhed well to the intereſts of the people, and the few ſober hours that he enjoyed, made him even odious to himſelf. His fears were encreaſed by the predictions of the aſtrologers, who ſtuck up prayers in every public place in the city, commanding him to die before the calends of October. It is not to be ſuppoſed that thoſe men could foretel future events, but they were ſenſible, that the emperor could not long prevent his own deſtruction, unleſs he made a total change in his conduct, and of that there was but very little hopes. Theſe predictions drove him to a ſtate of madneſs; for he ordered all the aſtrologers to be baniſhed from Rome, and as ſome of them had foretold that if he ſurvived his mother, he would be happy many years, he reſolved to ſtarve her to death, or at leaſt to deprive her of ſuch reſources as would ſerve to prolong her life.

But all theſe precautions to ſecure his wretched life, proved ineffectual, for his own example having corrupted the ſoldiers, they began to mutiny, and wiſhing for a new emperor, reſolved to place Veſpaſian on the throne. Veſpaſian, who had acquired

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great honour from his knowledge in military affairs, had been ſent by Nero againſt the Jews, and news was brought him of the death of that emperor, juſt at the time that he was going to lay ſiege to Jeruſalem. He had continued neuter during the reigns of Galba and Otho, rightly imagining that they would not long enjoy the purple; but no ſooner did he hear that Vitellius was raiſed to the throne, than he declared himſelf for him.

As he had not received any orders in what manner he was to act againſt the Jews after the death of Nero, he went to Alexandria, where he had not been long, when the army, with whom he was a great favourite, proclaimed him emperor. However ambitious Veſpaſian might be to enjoy ſuch an high honour as that of emperor, yet he ſeemed reluctant to accept of it, till the ſoldiers threatened him with immediate death, if he continued to deſpiſe and reject their choice. This induced him to call a council of war, wherein it was reſolved on, that Titus, ſon of Veſpaſian, ſhould carry on the war againſt the Jews, while he raiſed forces in the eaſt, in order to take poſſeſſion of the empire, and that Mutianus, one of his generals, ſhould be ſent at the head of ſome legions to Italy, in order to ſound the inclinations of the people, and diſcover whether Vitellius was as odious to them as had been repreſented.

It was not long before Vitellius received news of the ſoldiers having made choice of Veſpaſian to be emperor; but although he knew that Italy would ſoon be invaded by an armed force, yet ſuch was his ſloth and indolence, that he ſeemed to take very little notice of it.

Antonius Primus entered Italy at the head of ſome legions, and was met at Cremona by Valus and

and Cecinna; but inſtead of coming to a general engagement, Cecinna revolted, and went over to join the forces belonging to Veſpaſian. However, having conſidered his conduct as too raſh, he reſumed his former ſtation, and a bloody battle enſued, which laſted till night, without any thing deciſive being done; and when both parties began to renew the charge in the morning, the legions under the command of Cecinna were ſtruck with a pannic, and fled in great diſorder, leaving thirty thouſand dead on the field. They then ordered their general Cecinna to intercede for them with the conqueror, who granted them a free pardon; but many of the citizens of Cremona were murdered in the moſt barbarous manner, for no other reaſon but that they had opened their gates to the vanquiſhed. News of the defeat of his army was brought to Vitellius at Rome, while he was indulging himſelf in all ſorts of luxury, and then, inſtead of going in perſon to retrieve his loſs, he gave himſelf up to fear and cowardice. Two of his generals, Alphenus Varus and Julius Priſcus, were ordered to go at the head of an army of obſervation, to guard all the paſſes of the Appenines, in order, if poſſible, to prevent the enemy's taking poſſeſſion of Rome.

At laſt the clamours of the people run ſo high againſt him, that, in order to repair his diſgrace, he ſet out to take upon him the command of the army, but that rather did him injury than any real ſervice. The ſoldiers looked upon him with contempt, and to complete his misfortunes, news was brought him that his whole fleet had declared for Veſpaſian. Weak, luxurious, and diſpirited, he left the camp, and returned to Rome, from whence he ſent meſſengers to offer terms of accommodation to Veſpaſian, offering to reſign the throne upon condition his life

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was ſpared, and ſome ſmall allowance granted to ſupport him. Sabinus, one of his favourites, having adviſed Vitellius to reſign, his counſel was ſlighted; upon which, in a fit of rage, he ſeized on the capitol, but the emperor's guards having attacked that moſt beautiful ſtructure, the whole was in a few hours conſumed to aſhes.

Many perſons of diſtinction, beſides others, periſhed in the flames; and Sabinus being taken priſoner, was, by the emperor's order, put to death, and all the others who had the misfortune to be made priſoners were butchered in the moſt cruel manner. At laſt Antonius, Veſpaſian's general, attacked the city of Rome, and although Vitellius's ſoldiers made a brave defence, yet the gates were ſtormed, and one univerſal ſcene of ſlaughter enſued. This happened at a time when the citizens, regardleſs of their fate, were rioting in ſuch ſcenes of debauchery as are a diſgrace to human nature. Mangled bodies were lying in the ſame ſtreets where the people were either drinking to exceſs, or ſleeping in the arms of harlots, from which we may naturally draw this concluſion, that the Roman people were then ſtrangers both to public and private virtue.

During this dreadful ſcene of confuſion, Vitellius had ſome thoughts of ſaving himſelf by flight, but being altogether weak and diſpirited, he hid himſelf in an obſcure corner of the palace, where he was found by ſome of the victorious ſoldiers, and dragged out into the ſtreets. He begged, in the moſt abject manner, that they would ſpare his life till the arrival of Veſpaſian; but they paid no regard to his entreaties, for, tying his hands behind his back, and his hair backwards, marks of diſgrace uſually put upon the moſt notorious malefactors,

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they led him through the moſt public ſtreets, holding the point of a ſpear under his chin, leſt he ſhould endeavour to conceal his face. The populace, who abhorred him to the utmoſt degree, threw dirt at him as he was led along, while others ſtruck him with their hands, and ſome mocked him becauſe of his corpulency.

Having thus gratified their reſentment againſt the moſt wretched prince that ever ſat upon a throne, they put an end to his miſerable life, and, to complete their ſavage triumph, his body was dragged through the ſtreets, and then thrown into the Tiber. Such was the end of Vitellius, in the fifty-ſeventh year of his age, after a ſhort reign of little more than eight months. Some of the emperors who had reigned before him had begun their reigns with acts of clemency, particularly Nero and Caligula; but this wretch gave a ſcope to his paſſions at once, without ever conſidering that he would one day be made a public example to ſatisfy the rage of thoſe people whom he had ſo baſely injured by trampling on their juſt rights and privileges.

As ſoon as the voluptuous emperor Vitellius was no more, the city of Rome exhibited ſuch a diſmal ſcene as is ſhocking to human nature, for in the ſtreets nothing was to be ſeen but the mangled bodies of thoſe who had been murdered in the moſt licentious manner by the ſoldiers. Neither age nor ſex could protect the innocent from the mercileſs rage of the ſoldiers, for their houſes were plundered, and themſelves dragged out, and then murdered in the ſtreets. The rabble, ever ready to take part in any inſurrection, gave all the aſſiſtance they could to the ſoldiers, for they directed them to the houſes of thoſe who A. D. 70.

were

were ſuppoſed to be poſſeſſed of moſt money, while the ſlaves, impatient of reſtraint, joined the populace, and pointed out to them the places where their maſters effects were concealed. In a word, nothing could equal the diſtreſſes of the citizens, nor was any thing to be heard in the ſtreets but lamentation and mourning by thoſe who had loſt their neareſt relations, and were ready to lay violent hands on themſelves.

Nature now ſeemed to be deficient in finding new objects for the ferocious ſoldiers, and the licentious rabble to wreak their vengeance upon, and therefore, upon the arrival of Mutianus, the general of Veſpaſian, a ſtop was put to theſe diſorders, and tranquillity began to take place of riot, murder, and bloodſhed. The people wiſhed for a new emperor, who, by a prudent conduct, would heal their bleeding wounds, and reſtore to them that peace which they had ſo long ſought for in vain.

As the whole body of people as well as the ſenate were unanimous in the choice of Veſpaſian to be emperor, ſo meſſengers were ſent to him in Egypt, requeſting his immediate appearance in Rome, in order to take upon himſelf the government of the empire. But the winter being extremely ſevere, and there being ſeveral diſſentions among the ſoldiers, he reſolved to defer his voyage ſome time longer. Claudius Civilis, who commanded in Lower Germany, had ſo far ingratiated himſelf with the ſoldiers, that he threw off all ſubjection to the ſenate, and advanced at the head of a conſiderable army, to engage with Cerealis, the general of Veſpaſian. Several engagements enſued, with various ſucceſs, and although Cerealis was in general victorious, yet ſuch were the inteſtine

teſtine diviſions in the Roman empire, and ſo many incurſions were daily made by the barbarians, that Civil s obtained a free pardon, both for himſelf and the troops that ſerved under him.

In the mean time, to encreaſe the general calamity, the Sarmatians, a hardy, warlike, and barbarous people, made ſeveral incurſions into the Roman empire, and put ſeveral of the garriſons to the ſword. Rubrius Gallus, who acted as lieutenant to Veſpaſian in the Eaſt, made ſeveral attempts to repell theſe hardy invaders, but altho' the Roman diſcipline overcame their natural courage, yet nothing could totally ſubdue them, for they continued to increaſe ſo faſt in numbers, that, till the final diſſolution of the Roman empire, they never ceaſed to make frequent incurſions into the provinces, carrying along with them fire and ſword.

Veſpaſian, who now conſidered it his duty to repair to Italy, left Egypt ſome few months after he had received an invitation from the ſenate, and was met ſeveral miles from Rome by a vaſt concourſe of people, who congratulated him upon his new dignity, and promiſed themſelves uninterrupted happineſs from his prudence and moderation. For once they were not wrong in the conjectures they had formed, for Veſpaſian, intending to profit by the miſconduct of his predeceſſors, ſet the citizens an example of ſobriety and virtue, and endeavoured to reform by lenient meaſures all ſuch abuſes as had crept into the ſtate.

Nor was his clemency leſs remarkable, for he granted a free pardon to thoſe who had taken up arms againſt him, well knowing, that during the diſtractions that often take place in a commonwealth, many perſons are obliged to take part with that

that ſide with which they have no connexion, but only to promote their own intereſt, and preſerve their privileges. In ſuch caſes the moſt virtuous know not whom to declare for, and if they remain neuter, they are conſidered as enemies to both. This conſideration ſhould have great weight with conquerors, and at ſuch times prevent them from wreaking their vengeance on thoſe, whoſe intereſts, at leaſt, according to the beſt of their judgment, induced them to join with the unfortunate party. Such were the principles upon which Veſpaſian began his reign, and how far his ſubſequent conduct was conſiſtent therewith, will appear in the courſe of theſe letters.

Having thus conducted Veſpaſian to Rome, where he was inveſted with the enſigns of regal authority, we ſhall now return to his ſon Titus, who was left to carry on the war againſt the Jews. The character of Titus, as one of the moſt benevolent princes that ever lived, will appear hereafter; and although he received provocations of a very aggravating nature from the Jews, yet his natural clemency never forſook him, for oppoſition and ingratitude ſerved rather to humanize than harden his mind.

The Jews, the moſt antient, and the moſt venerable people at that time in the world, ſeemed eager to meet their own deſtruction. Joſephus tells us, that they had arrived to ſuch a height of impiety, that if a foreign enemy had not come to execute the vengeance of Heaven upon them, they would have put an end to their own exiſtence. Ignorant of their own religion, they had crucified the Lord of Glory, and vainly imagining that they were ſtill the favourites of Heaven, they imagined that God would, in a miraculous manner, deliver them from the power of the Romans. Simon and John,

John, two of the moſt active among them, put themſelves at the head of different parties, and, as they were moſt inveterate againſt each other, ſo they ſpread deſolation wherever they came. Jeruſalem was filled with murder and bloodſhed, from the one end to the other, and, as our Saviour had foretold, all ſocial obligations were forgotten, and thoſe who were moſt nearly allied became the ſevereſt enemies to each other.

Such was the miſerable unhappy ſituation of Jeruſalem, when the amiable Titus took upon him the command of the legions, in the room of his father. He had offered them every term of accommodation, and would have granted thoſe who were in arms a free pardon, but they laboured under a penal infatuation, for the time of their deſtruction was come.

Titus approached the walls of that celebrated city juſt at the time the people were going to celebrate the feaſt of the paſſover, and then it was filled with all thoſe who had come from different parts to be preſent at the ſolemnity. Every houſe was full, nor could it be ſuppoſed that the Jews, notwithſtanding that obſtinacy for which they had been ſo long held in deteſtation by the Romans, would be able to hold out many days. The inteſtine diviſions that had ſo long reigned among the Jews ſeemed for ſome time to have been forgotten, and both parties, or rather all parties, however inveterate againſt each other, joined in one common intereſt, in order to oppoſe the Romans.

Accordingly they made a moſt furious ſally upon the beſiegers, and being in a manner driven to deſpair, they fought with ſuch courage, even bordering upon madneſs, that Titus was obliged to retreat, leſt his whole army ſhould have been cut in pieces. The

Jews,

Jews, elated with what they thought a complete victory, returned to the city, and there commenced hoſtilities againſt each other, for to ſuch a ſtate of madneſs were they now driven, that they muſt either kill or be killed.

In the mean time, Titus having rallied his army, put them in mind of the diſgrace they would bring upon the Roman eagles if they ſuffered themſelves to be thus put to flight in ſo ſhameful a manner, upon every trifling occaſion. He put them in the diſtracted ſtate into which the Jews had thrown themſelves by their own inteſtine diviſions, and pointed out the glory that would attend their having ſubdued a people who truſted more in their gods for ſucceſs, than in either conduct or perſonal courage. The ſoldiers promiſed to follow their commander, wherever he ſhould lead them; and accordingly a moſt furious attack was made upon the outer walls.

Titus, whoſe clemency was his moſt predominant virtue, ſent ſeveral meſſengers to the Jews, offering the moſt advantageous terms of peace, but they were ſo infatuated, that they conſidered all his conceſſions as ſo many marks of cowardice, and therefore diſmiſſed his offers with contempt.

Jeruſalem was ſurrounded by three walls, two of which Titus had taken down, but ſtill being willing to prevent the effuſion of human blood, he ſent Joſephus, who was a Jew, to endeavour, if poſſible, to perſuade his countrymen to hearken to the voice of reaſon; but all was in vain, for they treated him with the utmoſt contempt, and repreſented him as one, who, in order to ingratiate himſelf with the Romans, had been an enemy to his own country, and wanted to deſtroy thoſe rights and privileges which they had ſo long enjoyed.

Joſephus

Joſephus having related to Titus the manner in which he was treated by his countrymen, a council of war was immediately called, in which it was declared that a trench ſhould be thrown up around the city, to prevent the people from receiving any ſupply of proviſions. One would have thought that the appearance of immediate famine would have brought thoſe obſtinate people to hearken to the voice of reaſon, but all in vain, for the nearer their deſtruction appeared, the leſs care they took to preſerve themſelves. Famine, with all its dreadful conſequences, now raged in every part of Jeruſalem. The common proviſions were ſpent, and even horſes dung was ſold to ſome of the moſt wealthy, after all the dead dogs and cats had been greedily devoured. Nay, we are told by Joſephus, that women killed their own children, in order to allay the cravings of hunger, while ſome drawed lots which ſhould firſt be made uſe of to ſupply thoſe who were in want of natural food. The Jews, who had long deceived themſelves with falſe hopes, were now driven to a ſtate of deſpair, and Titus having made a breach in the inner wall, proceeded as far as the temple, where he was met by a large body of the Jews. His deſign was to have ſaved the temple, but a ſoldier having thrown a firebrand into it, the whole ſtructure became one blaze, while ſome of the moſt ſuperſtitious violently threw themſelves into the flames, ſaying, "Why ſhould we live any longer after our "temple is deſtroyed, and our city, the queen of "nations, taken by the Romans?"

LETTER

## LETTER XLVI.

FEW people ever ſold their liberties dearer than the Jews, for ſuch as had eſcaped the ſword in the city fled to Mount Zion, a very ſtrong fort, but that was beaten down, and moſt of the wretches who had fought ſo deſperately were condemned to perpetual impriſonment. The walls of the city were thrown down, the houſes were razed to the ground, and the earth plowed up. About a million of people periſhed by the ſword and famine, during this miſerable ſiege, which laſted ſix months, and with Jeruſalem ended the Jewiſh nation, for that people have ever ſince been ſcattered through the world, without any fixed habitation.

This memorable event had been foretold by our Saviour, but his words were diſregarded: thoſe who bought him of Judas for thirty pieces of ſilver were ſold by the Romans for thirty a penny. The ſoldiers were ſo much in love with Titus, that they would have made him emperor, and crowned him where the temple ſtood; but he had too ſacred a regard to filial duty, to accept of ſuch an honour while his father was alive. His fame ſpread throughout all the empire, and a triumphal arch was erected to his memory by the citizens of Rome, at their own expence. His triumphal entry into Rome was the moſt ſplendid that had been ever beheld by the people, and among other trophies of his victory over the Jews were the books of the old Teſtament, which had been brought out of the temple, and were depoſited in the Roman library.

To

To add to the felicity of the people, the temple of Janus was ſhut up, after it had been open ſeveral years: ſo that tranquillity took place under Veſpaſian. The firſt work undertaken by the emperor was to correct and reform ſuch abuſes as had crept into the ſtate during the late times of riot and licentiouſneſs, and, if poſſible, to reſtore good order among the people.

To effectuate ſo valuable a purpoſe, he joined his ſon Titus in the government with him, well knowing that the people would readily obey him from motives of love rather than fear. The army in a particular manner attracted his attention, for the ſoldiers had become ſo licentious, that it was a very difficult matter to make them ſubmit to proper diſcipline. Such of the ſenators and knights as were obnoxious to the people, he degraded from their dignity, and placed in their room men of the ſtricteſt integrity. The courts of law, which had, during the late troubles, been proſtituted to the baſeſt purpoſes, and filled with a band of thieves to prey upon the people, he put under proper regulations, and ordered that every perſon ſhould have juſtice done him as ſoon as his complaint ſhould be heard. Such of the public buildings as had been hurt or demoliſhed, he ordered to be rebuilt, particularly the capitol, which he adorned in the moſt ſplendid manner, and made it more magnificent than before.

Among other new ſtructures which Veſpaſian erected, in order to adorn the city of Rome was a ſpacious and elegant amphitheatre, of which ſome part ſtill remains, as a monument of his good taſte and unbounded liberality. Nor was he leſs mindful of the other cities in the empire; for many of them were rebuilt, and ſuch as had been damaged during

during the wars, were repaired and adorned with every thing that was either grand or uſeful. In general, the people were extremely happy under this emperor; for juſtice was adminiſtered in the moſt impartial manner, and we meet with very few inſtances in this reign of ſuch acts of cruelty as had diſgraced his predeceſſors. One, however, muſt not be paſſed over in ſilence; for hiſtory addreſſes itſelf to a diſtant period,, when the actions of the greateſt men will be weighed in the balance of natural equity, where they will often be found wanting of many praiſes beſtowed upon them by thoſe who look more to the ſhadow than to the ſubſtance.

Upon the death of Vitellius, when the empire was in the utmoſt ſtate of confuſion, Julius Sabienus, who commanded in Gaul, got himſelf proclaimed emperor by the ſoldiers; but a party belonging to Veſpaſian being ſent to oppoſe him, his men were totally defeated, and he obliged to ſeek ſhelter in a cave, where he remained nine years, ſupported by his faithful wife Eponina, who procured him proviſions in the day, and brought them to him by night.

In this manner did the unfortunate Sabienus live, without any one ſuppoſing him to be alive, till at laſt his faithful wife was diſcovered, and he was taken priſoner to Rome. His wife begged for him in the moſt earneſt manner, mingling tears with her entreaties, and many of the greateſt perſons in Rome interceded for him, but all in vain, for the emperor Veſpaſian conſidered him as too dangerous a rival in the empire, and therefore he was put to death in the moſt ignominious manner. But, however unjuſtifiable ſuch an act of cruelty may appear to perſons of enlarged minds, and endowed with generoſity

neroſity and benevolence, yet the many other good actions performed by this emperor, or under his immediate inſpection, may induce us to draw a veil over it, eſpecially as it may in ſome meaſure be extenuated on the principles of ſtate neceſſity.

He married the daughter of Vitellius to one of the Roman noblemen, and altho' her father had been his avowed rival, yet he furniſhed her with a marriage portion at his own expence. He was ſo conſcious of his integrity as a ſovereign in the adminiſtration of public affairs, that when any of his favourites gave him notice of conſpiracies being formed againſt him, he paid no regard to them, but only told them that he had not given any offence to the people, and therefore he was not afraid of his moſt ſecret enemies. Metius Pompoſianus, one of thoſe moſt ſuſpected of being his enemy, he raiſed to the dignity of conſul, and ſo, by a well timed act of generoſity, obliged him to become his friend.

Nor was he leſs careful in promoting all ſorts of uſeful laws than in reforming the abuſes of the ſtate. Joſephus, the famous Jewiſh hiſtorian, was one of his immediate favourites, and Pliny, the great naturaliſt, was ſupported by his bounty. He gave great encouragement towards promoting the ſtudy of rhetoric, and the ſame munificence that ſhone ſo conſpicuous in Rome, diffuſed itſelf throughout the moſt remote parts of the empire. Such was the fair ſide of his character, but theſe virtues were not without ſeveral blemiſhes.

Veſpaſian had a natural turn for avarice, and his unbounded liberality to learned men gave him an excuſe for impoſing many taxes, in their own nature both illegal and oppreſſive. Nay, it is even aſſerted that he dealt in the purchaſing and ſelling of diffe-

rent commodities, and to ſuch an height did his avarice lead him, that he even laid a tax upon urine. In what manner this abominable tax was collected is now to us problematical, but we are aſſured that his ſon, the amiable Titus, remonſtrated to him upon it, tho' without any ſucceſs.

But altho' he was oppreſſive on the private property of the people, yet he never loſt ſight of providing for their ſafety againſt the common enemy, I mean thoſe barbarous, tho' brave nations, with which the empire was ſurrounded. He employed the moſt able generals, for as he had been brought up in the army, ſo he was no ſtranger to real merit, and knew in what manner to reward thoſe who did any diſtinguiſhing action in ſupport of the Roman grandeur.

The people in the provinces were ſo well ſatisfied with the equity of his government, that we find but few accounts of inſurrections taking place, and thoſe for the moſt part were but of a trifling nature. Antiochus, king of a ſmall province called Comagena, had for ſome time kept up a private correſpondence with the Parthians, but he was defeated and taken priſoner in Cilicia, and ſent to Rome, where he imagined the emperor would order him to be put to death. His fears, however, were ſoon diſpelled, for, being brought before Veſpaſian, the emperor gave him leave to reſide in Lacedemon, and ordered that a certain ſum ſhould be annually paid for his ſubſiſtance.

A. D. 73. Much about the ſame time, Veſpaſian was obliged to ſend his beloved ſon Titus to oppoſe the Alani, a nation of wild barbarians, who made an irruption into Media, and from thence to Armenia, murdering all who came in their way, and ſpreading deſolation wherever they came.

But

But no ſooner had they heard of the approach of the Roman army, than they retreated, and Titus returned, loaded with ſpoils and honours.

In this reign, by the moderation of the emperor, great part of Britain was ſubdued, and reduced into a Roman province, ſo as to pay annual taxes to the emperor in a regular manner. Indeed, whatever might have been the ruling motives in the breaſt of this emperor, certain it is, he never diſcovered the leaſt ſign of ambition in any part of his conduct, nor would he ſuffer the people to load him with the flattering titles which they had beſtowed upon his predeceſſors.

As he had been deſcended of mean parents, ſome of his favourites deſired him to conceal his birth, and give out that his origin had been more noble than was repreſented, but he always checked them, by taking notice, that merit alone can entitle men to reſpect, and that the field of glory was open to thoſe even of the meaneſt extraction. At laſt, after a glorious reign of ten years, during which his ſubjects enjoyed more happineſs than they had for many years before, he was taken ill one day while he was viſiting the Campania, and, his illneſs encreaſing, he was carried to the city, in order to have proper advice. But the diſeaſe mocked the power of medicine, and he expired in the arms of his attendants, without ſhewing the leaſt ſigns of diſcompoſure. He was the tenth Roman emperor, and the ſecond who died a natural death, and, if we conſider the diſtracted ſtate of the empire when he took the government upon himſelf, it will appear ſurprizing how he could reign with ſuch glory, and yet excerciſe ſo much moderation, even to thoſe who were his profeſſed enemies. He was ſo well acquainted with his own natural temper, that he was neither dejected by

adverſity, nor too much elevated by proſperity. He conſidered every thing as of a fluctuating nature, and he ſat upon the throne as conſcious that he muſt one day reſign it. If he was cruel in the impoſition of taxes, even that rigour ſtands juſtified, when we conſider the turbulent diſpoſition of the people.

A. D. 79. Veſpaſian was ſucceeded in the empire by his ſon Titus, who had long been the favourite of the people, and no oppoſition was made to him, except by his brother Domitian, who alledged that his father had left him ſole heir. The ſenate, however, and the people were unanimous in electing Titus, and he began his reign in ſuch a manner, that they had no reaſon to repent of their choice. Some of thoſe who hated him, during the life of his father, had accuſed him of many licentious actions, but no ſooner did he aſcend the throne, than he gave a convincing proof, that whatever his former vices might have been, yet he had left them all behind, and that the proſperity and happineſs of the people was the ſole object he had in view.

His paſſions, tho' of the moſt tender and amiable nature, were ſtrong, but he brought them under the command of reaſon; for altho' he was violently in love with Berenice, ſiſter of Agrippa, who had been king of the Jews, yet as he knew that a marriage of that nature would give the utmoſt offence to the Roman people, he therefore loaded her with preſents, and ſent her away.

He had attached himſelf too much to the company of ſome young noblemen, who rioted in all ſorts of debauchery, but now he diſcarded them, telling them, that none but the virtuous were to be his companions, and as ſoon as they refrained from their vile practices, he was ready to treat them with the

the ſame ſhare of his confidence as before, from which part of his conduct he was called The Delight of Mankind.

As tyrants are always hated by their ſubjects, ſo their minds are continually filled with ſuſpicion, and for that reaſon alone they find themſelves under a neceſſity of employing the meaneſt wretches to give notice of all thoſe whom they conſider as diſaffected to their perſon or government; but Titus, who loved popularity, and wiſhed only to reign in the hearts of his people as an object of veneration, ordered, that no rewards ſhould be given to ſuch miſcreants, and if any of them delivered informations, they were either obliged to make good the charge, or ſubmit to be puniſhed in the moſt exemplary manner.

The crimes of theſe wretches had ariſen to an enormous height, no perſon was ſafe from their machinations, for the moſt innocent had been dragged from their houſes and families, and put to death without ſo much as the form of a trial. Titus was ſenſible that ſuch practices were inconſiſtent with the natural liberties of a free people, who are the fountain of power, and therefore he ordered that they ſhould be baniſhed to the moſt remote provinces of the empire, or ſold as ſlaves to the moſt barbarous nations, who had ſcarce ever ſubmitted to the Roman yoke. Public ſhews were exhibited in the moſt magnificent manner for the entertainment of the public, in order to keep alive the martial ſpirit for which their anceſtors had been ſo long celebrated; and, in a word, Titus became the favourite of the Romans.

He took ſo much pleaſure in doing good, that one evening, while at ſupper with his friends, he happened to recollect that he had done nothing

that day to ſerve any of his ſubjects, and ſtarting up in ſeeming confuſion, he called out, "Alas! "my friends, I have loſt a day." His mind ſeemed to be ſo much fixed upon promoting the intereſts of the people, that he even took pleaſure in having any part of his conduct canvaſſed, that he might have an opportunity of enquiring into the nature of the accuſation, and, if juſtly founded, to avoid acting ſo for the future.

It was with the utmoſt reluctance he put any man to death, and when he found himſelf under an obligation to ſign the warrant for the execution of a criminal, it was evident to thoſe who attended him, that he did it contrary to his inclinations.

It was in the reign of this emperor that the famous Julius Agricola penetrated into the moſt interior parts of Britain, and ſubdued many nations of thoſe warlike barbarians hitherto unknown to the Romans. This celebrated commander, who had done more towards ſubduing the Britons than all thoſe who had been in the iſland before him, penetrated into that part ſince called Scotland; but as he found that it would be difficult for him to reduce it into a Roman province, he threw up a wall of turf between the Forth and the Clyde, placing centinels at proper intervals, to prevent the northern barbarians from making incurſions into the Roman province, as they had hitherto done.

The moſt memorable incident recorded by hiſtorians as happening in this reign, was an eruption of Mount Veſuvius, which broke out with ſuch velocity that many towns and villages were totally deſtroyed. Pliny, the author of the Natural Hiſtory, loſt his life on this memorable occaſion, for a curioſity peculiar to himſelf having led him too near the Volcano, he fell down dead, ſuffocated, as conjectured, by

ſome

ſome groſs and noxious vapour. A fire broke out in Rome at the ſame time, which deſtroyed many of the public ſtructures, but the munificence of the emperor repaired the damages, and left the city in as elegant a manner as it was in the days of his father Veſpaſian.

But ſuch a reign of uninterrupted happineſs to the people did not laſt long, for the emperor was ſeized with a violent fever, which put an end to his life in the forty-firſt year of his age, and third of his reign. Some of the Roman hiſtorians have inſinuated that Titus was poiſoned by the direction of his brother Domitian, but whatever truth might have been in that, there is no evidence at preſent remaining to ſupport it.

The character of Titus will be beſt known from the foregoing narrative, and ſurely, if ever a prince deſerved the appellation of the delight of mankind, it muſt have been him. His throne, with all its dignities, did not ſhut up the bowels of compaſſion in his heart, which are the moſt ſolid glories of princes; for no perſon ever delivered a petition without having ſuch an anſwer as the emperor could give, conſiſtent with his intereſt and honour.

Titus having thus paid the debt of nature to the inexpreſſible grief of all thoſe who wiſhed well to the intereſts of the people, his brother Domitian was made choice of to ſucceed him. The former part of his life had been tainted with many crimes of the moſt odious nature, but they were all obſcured in the virtues of his brother, and he was raiſed to the purple rather in hopes of what he would do, than from a conviction that he had done any thing to merit ſo high an honour. A. D. 81.

Indeed, he was no ſtranger to the natural rights of the people, nor unacquainted with the connexions

that muſt at all times ſubſiſt between the governor and the governed. Accordingly, he began his reign in ſuch a manner as gave pleaſure to the people in general; for clemency, benevolence, and liberality ſeemed to be the diſtinguiſhing marks of his character. Such perſons as had been injured were readily admitted to his preſence, where they were ſure of having their complaints redreſſed, and he would often ſit whole days to reverſe the decrees of the judges. Literature in particular ſeemed to engage his attention, for he ordered that all the public libraries ſhould be repaired, and in room of ſuch copies as had been loſt, ſuch as were moſt valuable were collected together, in order to ſupply their place. Learned men were ſent to Alexandria to collect what books were ſtill remaining there, and in general the Roman people began to look upon themſelves as under the government of a ſecond Titus.

We have already ſeen in what manner the emperors Caligula and Nero began their reigns, namely, as the favourites of the people, but ſhort indeed was the continuance. No ſooner had the people formed hopes of the moſt uninterrupted happineſs, than thoſe emperors became ſlaves to their own unnatural paſſions, and inſtead of conſidering themſelves as the firſt officers in the republic, they began to imagine that the whole empire had been formed for the ſupport of their crimes.

It was the ſame with Domitian, for altho' the beginning of his reign had been diſtinguiſhed by ſeveral acts of clemency, yet no ſooner did he ſee his popularity eſtabliſhed, than he began to trample on the laws, and ſet aſide the moſt ſacred obligations.

His mind was mean, low, vulgar, and groveling; he had no pleaſure in any thing of a manly nature, conſiſtent with his dignity as a hero, and much leſs

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ſo as an emperor, for his time was ſpent in the company of buffoons, who ſaid every thing poſſible to flatter his vanity. Philoſophers of every ſort were baniſhed from Rome, as perſons of no ſervice to the public, and none could procure the leaſt ſhare of his favour, unleſs they invented ſome new games, or diſtinguiſhed themſelves by ſuch acts of dexterity as are ſcarce worth the name of trifles. Shews of all ſorts were daily exhibited, and the whole deſign of this emperor ſeems to have been, to make the people as effeminate as himſelf.

His leiſure hours in his cloſet were ſpent in catching flies, and ſo much was he attached to that trifling and ridiculous employment, that one day, when a courtier aſked if any perſon was along with the emperor, he was anſwered, not ſo much as a fly. Such are the characters of ſome of thoſe dignified tyrants, who, by a concurrence of fortuitous events, place themſelves at the head of a republic, and then, inſtead of attending to the affairs of government, ſpend their time in amuſements beneath the dignity of ſchool-boys.

But happy had it been for the Roman people, had fly-catching been his greateſt vice; that could not have much affected the ſtate, nor been attended with any great prejudice to individuals. Domitian reſolved that none ſhould go before him in the career of crimes, and therefore, to give a ſpecimen of his arbitrary diſpoſition, he recalled the famous Agricola from Britain, juſt at the time when he was upon the point of making an entire conqueſt of that iſland.

Agricola was the firſt who had ever penetrated into Scotland, at leaſt into that part of it that lays north of the Clyde and Forth, and by the moſt unwearied induſtry he had diſcovered that Britain was an iſland entirely encompaſſed by the ſea. This procured him

no ſmall degree of reputation, but at the ſame time the emperor became envious of him, ſo that he was obliged to reſign his command, and ſoon after his return to Rome he died at his country ſeat, not without violent ſuſpicion that the emperor was concerned in it.

Soon after the death of Agricola, the Sarmatians, a barbarous people, made an incurſion into the Roman empire, and being joined by ſeveral of thoſe who were diſaffected to the government, a whole legion was cut off. The emperor had been ſome time in Germany, in order to appeaſe ſome of thoſe warlike barbarians who inhabited that part of the world, and altho' he was conſcious that his ſucceſs did not entitle him to the approbation of the public, yet, upon his return to Rome, he inſiſted upon a triumph, which was granted him, altho' at the ſame time moſt of the citizens, as well as ſenators, conſidered it only as a piece of ſolemn mockery. The Sarmatians, it is true, were in ſome meaſure defeated, but ſtill they were not ſubdued; and, altho' for ſome time obliged to retire behind their inacceſſible mountains, yet it was only to gain time, that they might be more able to encounter the Romans than ever.

In the mean time Domitian went on in the whole of his conduct ſo inconſiſtent with his duty and intereſt, that he ſeemed to long for his own deſtruction. Not ſatisfied with the common appellations that were daily beſtowed upon him, he even aſſumed divine honours, and inſiſted that he ſhould be ranked among the gods. He iſſued orders that ſtatues of him ſhould be erected in the moſt public cities of the empire, and that thoſe ſhould be puniſhed with death, who did not offer ſacrifice to them.

Nor was his cruelty leſs than his madneſs and extravagance. Many of the Roman ſenators were put

put to death, upon the moſt frivolous pretences, nor could either virtue or integrity ſcreen the moſt innocent from his reſentment. The governors and generals in the provinces who had acquired the good will of the people by acts of prudence and moderation, were marked out for deſtruction, becauſe Domitian could not bear the thoughts of another perſon ſurpaſſing him in merit. Some of the moſt eminent writers who had copied books on the principles of natural law were put to death in the moſt cruel manner, among whom was Junius Ruſticus, a man of a moſt excellent character, whoſe only fault was, he told the truth. Spies were employed in every part of the city, and although the converſation of thoſe who happened to be in company was only of a common or trifling nature, yet thoſe miſcreants would go to the emperor and repreſent it as a crime, and, in conſequence thereof, many innocent perſons loſt their lives. Saluſtius and Lucullus, his lieutenants in Britain, were put to death, by an order from the emperor himſelf, for no other reaſon but that they had acquired immortal honour by oppoſing the northern barbarians, and preventing the Roman province in this iſland from becoming ſubject to thoſe lawleſs invaders who every year came in multitudes into South-Britain, and ſpread all the horrors of war before them.

## LETTER XLVII.

SOME of the governors of the provinces embraced an opportunity that promiſed ſucceſs to their ambitious views, for, as Domitian had ſet no bounds to his extravagant actions, and every ſpecies of cruelty that could either be invented or inflicted, they doubted not but they might, by a fortuitous concurrence of events, drive from the ſeat of regal authority, a wretch who was a diſgrace to human nature.

The moſt forward of theſe was Lucius Antonius, lieutenant of Upper Germany, a man of undaunted courage, and the moſt unbounded ambition. He had brought great part of the army over to his party, but juſt as he had approached the Rhine, that river overflowed its banks, ſo that his men were divided, and Normandus, who commanded for Domitian, coming upon him at the ſame time, he was totally defeated.

The news of this ſucceſs was brought to the emperor at a time when he was beginning to deſpair, and inſtead of making a proper uſe of it by lenient meaſures, he launched out into greater acts of cruelty than ever. He even ſeemed to take pleaſure in them, and part of his time was ſpent in inventing new and unheard-of tortures. He joined hypocriſy to cruelty, and ſome of his moſt intimate friends and favourites were crucified on a pretended ſuſpicion that they had conſpired againſt him, and were enemies to his perſon and government, nay, that they only waited an opportunity to diſpatch him.

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That the people might be convinced that no character, be it ever ſo ſacred or reſpectable could protect the moſt dignified perſon in Rome from the cruelty of the emperor, he one evening invited the whole body of the ſenate to ſupper. They came at the time appointed, and were received in the moſt complaiſant manner, but when they came into the hall they found it hung with black, and coffins placed in the intermediate ſpaces, with the names of ſeveral of their members written upon them. A few glimmering lamps were lighted up, which ſerved only to heighten the ſolemnity of the ſcene, and at laſt ſome of the lictors came in attended by the guards dreſſed in the moſt mournful habits.

The ſenators now began to look upon themſelves as devoted to deſtruction; they were no ſtrangers to the ſuſpicious and vindictive character of the emperor, and therefore they began in earneſt to look for death. But although Domitian was a cruel inhuman tyrant, yet it does not ſeem that he had any thing farther in view than to eſtabliſh his own authority by an act of brutal pleaſure, in triumphing over the fears of men who were the guardians of the laws, and the fathers of the people. When he found that they looked upon each other as dead men, he ordered the gates of the palace to be ſet open, and, contrary to what they feared, every one was allowed to walk out, while Domitian ſmiled in ſecret that he had mortified their pride, and convinced them of what he had at any time in his power to do.

Nothing was more common than to ſee this abandoned emperor retire from a public execution to one of the public brothels, which had been licenſed by his order, and there ſpend the remainder of the day in the arms of a harlot. His avarice

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was ſuch, that in order to gratify an unnatural paſſion, he employed the vileſt wretches to give evidence againſt all thoſe whom he looked upon as diſaffected to his perſon and government, and though no proof of their guilt appeared, yet they were ſentenced to be put to death, and their eſtates ſold to thoſe who bid moſt money for them.

Among thoſe who fell under the ſeverity of his diſpleaſure, or rather, who were marked out for deſtruction by him, were the Jews, whoſe regal government, city and temple had been ſeverally aboliſhed by his brother Titus. Theſe people finding themſelves deſpiſed all over the Roman provinces as vagabonds, who had no ſettled habitation, nor the privilege of purchaſing one acre of land, took to the practice of lending money on uſury, and there is reaſon to believe that they often exacted the moſt exorbitant intereſt. As they were obnoxious to the Romans in general, ſo nothing was more common than to hear complaints exhibited againſt them to the ſenate at Rome, or the governors of the provinces. In all theſe cauſes both parties were heard, and as it often happened that the complaints againſt the Jews were the effect of malice rather than juſtice, ſo they ſtill continued to enjoy the protection of the emperors.

But notwithſtanding the equity of the magiſtrates in deciding between the Jews and the other ſubjects of the empire conſiſtent with law, yet the numerous complaints exhibited againſt theſe unhappy people, reached the ears of the emperor, and they were laid under the ſevereſt contributions. To give ſome colour to his unbounded cruelty, he made uſe of an inſinuation that there was an antient prophecy, that one of the family of David

David was to reign over all the world, and although this related to the ſpiritual kingdom of Chriſt, yet the emperor iſſued an order commanding all thoſe who were of the family of David to be put to death, and their effects brought into his own private treaſury. It was common with the Romans to blend the Jews and Chriſtians together, as one people, becauſe they were utterly ignorant of the tenets of either, and therefore, under pretence of puniſhing the Jews, the Chriſtians ſuffered a more ſevere perſecution than that which had taken place in the reign of Nero.

He iſſued an edict by which the Chriſtians were baniſhed to the moſt remote provinces of the empire, among whom was John the Evangeliſt, who was ſent to the iſland of Parmos, where he wrote that divine book now called The Revelations. Some of the aſtrologers, of which there were many in Rome, had publiſhed a prediction concerning the death of the emperor, and one of thoſe namely, Aſceleterion, being called upon to anſwer for the truth of his prediction, Domitian aſked him, "If "he knew what death he was to die?" "Yes; "(anſwered the aſtrologer) I am to be devoured "by dogs." Upon that he was ordered firſt to be ſlain, and then burned to aſhes, but a ſtorm coming the flames were diſpered, and the dogs eat the remains of his fleſh.

Domitian was now become odious to all ſober men who wiſhed well to the intereſt of the commonwealth. They had long been plagued with tyrants, not ſo much in conſequence of ſuperior power, but merely becauſe the love of virtue was in a manner extinct among them. They were not ignorant that the ſame methods by which tyrants had

had been extirpated, might be again put in practice, and therefore it was reſolved upon, that Domitian ſhould ſhare the ſame fate as ſome of thoſe who had gone before him.

This wretched emperor was a monſter of diſſimulation, and although he affected to careſs his wife, Domitia, yet he was convinced in his own mind that ſhe was an enemy to his meaſures, and had engaged to promote his deſtruction, in conſort with ſeveral other conſpirators. Domitia was a woman of a looſe character, inconſiſtent with that modeſty which is the ornament in general of the female ſex, for ſhe had forſaken her former huſband to live with the emperor, and the ſame fluctuating paſſion having ſtill continued to actuate every part of her conduct, ſhe fell in love with one Paris, a comedian, and at that time in great repute on the Roman ſtage. Their interviews were not carried on in ſo ſecret a manner, but the emperor got notice of them, and he was determined to take a cruel revenge. He uſed to keep a book in which he inſerted the names of all thoſe whom he devoted to deſtruction, and one day Domitia happening to look at it, ſaw her name among the others who were devoted to ſuffer as victims to Domitian's malice and cruelty.

Revenge, ſo conſiſtent with female characters, notwithſtanding their attachment to laciviouſneſs, now took place in the mind of this woman, and therefore, in order to provide for her own ſafety, ſhe ſhewed the fatal liſt to Petronius and Norbanus, præfects of the prætorian bands, who, along with her, were devoted to deſtruction. Parthenius, the chamberlain of the houſhold, was another of thoſe whom the emperor had devoted to deſtruction, and as ſelf-preſervation is the ſtrongeſt principle that can

can operate in the human breaſt, the deſtruction of the emperor was reſolved upon by thoſe, whom he had ſingled out as the objects of his malice. In the mean time, Domitian, whoſe death had been long foretold by the aſtrologers, began to look upon himſelf in danger, and in order to elude the machinations of his enemies, he ſhut himſelf up in his palace. He was ſo much terrified, that like all cowards, he often jumped out of bed in the night, imagining that he was ſurrounded by conſpirators.

This haſtened on his deſtruction, for one night jumping out of bed, he aſked if it was the proper time to go to the bath, and being anſwered that it was, he immediately dreſſed himſelf. He ordered all his ſervants to retire, and Stephanus approaching him, gave him a paper, containing an account of a pretended conſpiracy, but while he was reading it, he was ſtabbed in the groin. The ſtab was given by Stephanus, who had concealed a dagger under a ſcarf, in which his arm was tied up, but as the wound was not mortal, Domitian pulled him down, and called out for aſſiſtance, not doubting but ſome of his ſervants would come to reſcue him.

The emperor exerted himſelf to the utmoſt, in order to ſave his life, but juſt as he had almoſt overpowered Stephanus, Parthianus, one of his freedmen, came into the room, attended by ſeveral of the guards, and Domitian was inſtantly diſpatched, after receiving a great number of wounds. Juſt as the emperor was diſpatched, ſome of the guards, who had not been concerned in the conſpiracy, ruſhed in, and ſeeing their maſter dead, they ſlew Stephanus on the ſpot. Such was the end of Domitian, one of the moſt brutal tyrants that ever diſgraced regal dignity. His father had raiſed himſelf to the imperial throne by his valour, and he reigned

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in the hearts of his people by his equity and moderation. He adorned the city of Rome in the moſt elegant manner, and if ſome of his actions bordered upon ſeverity, yet they all conduced towards promoting the happineſs of the people. His brother Titus was the delight of mankind. He lived and acted for the good of his ſubjects, and when he died all ranks of people lamented that his reign had been ſo ſhort. On the other hand, Domitian had many advantages when he aſcended the throne, to which his father and brother were ſtrangers, but he trampled upon thoſe privileges, and at laſt fell a victim to the revenge of his injured ſubjects.

We are told by ſeveral of the Roman hiſtorians, and there is good reaſon for believing it, that Domitian was ſo little attentive towards promoting the love of his people, that when he was told they hated him, he coolly anſwered, "Let them hate me, then "I know they fear me." He looked upon all the ſubjects of the empire as made only for him to trample on, and he often wiſhed that they had but one neck, that he might ſtrike it off at one blow. He imagined, like many other tyrants, whoſe actions have diſgraced the annals of hiſtory, that he might live for ever, or at leaſt, during the term of his natural life, in committing every cruel action; but fatal experience at laſt convinced him that although the people may for ſome time ſubmit to be trampled on, yet the love of liberty, inſeparably connected with human nature, will exert itſelf and wreak its vengeance on the head of its oppreſſor.

Domitian ought to remain on record as an example to thoſe weak, and conſequently wicked princes who are fooliſh enough to imagine that they have an intereſt ſeparate from that of their ſubjects, the moſt fatal [illegible] that ever took place in a ſyſtem of

of politics. The intereſt of the people, and the glory of the prince, muſt go hand in hand together, and when any thing of a ſeparate nature takes place, convulſions muſt enſue in the commonwealth, and all things return to a ſtate of univerſal confuſion and anarchy.

The murder of Domitian was an event that gave great pleaſure to the Roman citizens in general, particularly to the ſenate, who ordered all his ſtatues to be pulled down, and loaded his memory with every mark of reproach. He was even denied a public funeral, but the ſoldiers, whom he had on many occaſions attached to himſelf by his bounty, conſidered his death as an event that would abridge their power, and deprive them of many perquiſites which they had formerly enjoyed. A. D. 96.

The ſenate, ſenſible that the ſoldiers would not fail to embrace the opportunity of chuſing a new emperor ſuitable to their own inclinations, reſolved to be before-hand with them, and therefore Cocceius Nerva was elected almoſt as ſoon as Domitian's death was known. This man, who according to ſome of the Roman hiſtorians was a native of Spain, and an eminent pattern of every virtue that could enoble the moſt exalted character, was above ſixty years of age, but ſtill admired by all who knew him. He was endowed with ſo much humility, that when the ſenate ſent a deputation of their own body to wait upon him with an account of the election, he thanked them for putting him in mind of his duty, and told them that the laws ſhould be the rule of his conduct, and his principal ſtudy that of promoting the intereſts of the people.

But notwithſtanding the virtues of Nerva that made his character ſhine ſo conſpicuous in a private ſtation,

ſtation, yet he had not that fortitude which is abſolutely neceſſary to conſtitute the character of a great prince. This weakneſs induced him to repoſe the utmoſt confidence in favourites, many of whom were obnoxious to the people, but as the Romans had been ſo long accuſtomed to the yoke of tyranny, they were too much pleaſed with their ſituation to complain.

Humanity, or an univerſal benevolence, were ſo interwoven in his mind, that, not content with that confidence placed in him by the people, he ſwore in the moſt ſolemn manner that no ſenator ſhould be put to death by his order, let their crimes be of ever ſo attrocious a nature. To this reſolution he adhered in ſo religious a manner, that when two of the ſenators entered into a conſpiracy to murder him, he ſent for them, and giving each of them a dagger, deſired them to ſtrike, for if he was guilty of any crime, he was willing to die.

Such acts of benevolence might have been conſidered in the moſt favourable light by ſome perſons whoſe notions of government were too much contracted; but the moſt ſenſible men among the Romans looked upon them rather as bordering on inſanity. They conſidered ſuch unlimited indulgence as an encouragement to the commiſſion of crimes, and a relaxation of the laws by which all ſorts of offenders are kept in proper ſubjection, and puniſhed in the moſt exemplary manner.

Many ſarcaſms were daily thrown out upon the emperor for his unbounded lenity, but ſtill he never complained at the greateſt freedom of ſpeech, being willing that his actions and profeſſions ſhould mutually illuſtrate and confirm each other. He was ſo deſirous of being beloved by the people, that rather than the provinces ſhould groan under the load of

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ſuch taxes as had been impoſed in former reigns to ſupport luxury, and reward favourites, he ſold his plate and all other things belonging to him, and brought the money into the public treaſury. He ordered that all informers, who had given falſe accounts of conſpiracies under Domitian, ſhould be put to death, and took care that during his reign no encouragement ſhould be given to ſuch wretches. All unneceſſary expences were aboliſhed, nor would he ſuffer any ſtatue of him to be placed in public, as had been the practice in ſome of the former reigns.

He had ſo little regard for money, that when it was brought to him, he ſeemed to conſider it as of no value, and if he appropriated any of it to his own uſe, it was only that he might have it in his power to reward thoſe who diſcharged their duty to the public. One of his courtiers having diſcovered a treaſure that lay concealed, brought it to the emperor, but Nerva, inſtead of taking it, applauded him for his honeſty, and deſired that he would keep it for the ſervice of his family.

But mildneſs of ſuch a diſtinguiſhing nature was only thrown away upon the Romans, who were of too turbulent a diſpoſition to conſider the virtues of their prince in a proper light. Many of the ſenators formed parties againſt him, but the greateſt puniſhments he inflicted on them, was only to ſend them into ſome of the more diſtant provinces. The moſt active of theſe conſpirators was Caſparius Olianus, one of the favourites of the late emperor, and as he was a very vicious man, ſo he inſiſted that the murder of Domitian ſhould be revenged. To facilitate his ſcheme he raiſed an inſurrection, which Nerva did all in his power to ſuppreſs in the moſt lenient manner, without going to extremities.

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But the ſoldiers were loſt to every ſenſe of duty, and regardleſs of the obligations they were under to the emperor and the republic, they murdered Petronius and Parthenius in the moſt barbarous manner, at the ſame time compelling Nerva to give a ſanction to their rebellion. Theſe extravagant actions of the ſoldiers induced the emperor to adopt Trajan to be his ſucceſſor, merely on account of his virtues, for he was no way related to his family. Trajan was then in Germany, but meſſengers being ſent for him, he came to Rome, where his ſpirited conduct ſubdued the licentiouſneſs of the ſoldiers, and brought all things into proper order. Nerva did not long ſurvive the choice he had made of Trajan, for being ſeized with a fever, he died at Rome, leaving behind him the character of a good man, although not an heroic emperor.

A. D. 98. Trajan aſcended the throne of the Roman empire amidſt the acclamations of the people, a circumſtance common even with the worſt of ſovereigns, becauſe the people generally beſtow their praiſes before they make a proper enquiry, whether the object is deſerving of them or not. He had long been the favourite of the people, as well as the ſoldiers, and his abilities were fit for any ſtation whatever. His anceſtors were Romans, but he was born at Seville in Spain, where his father commanded, and while very young, he attended him in ſeveral expeditions. During the time he ſerved under his father, he acquired great reputation, for he inured himſelf to all the hardſhips of the camp, and lived in the ſame manner as the common ſoldiers. When he was appointed to the command in Germany, he acted with ſuch moderation, that the ſoldiers conſidered him as a father rather than a general, for the conſummate wiſdom

of

of the commander ſhone conſpicuous in all his actions. His appearance was majeſtic, and his conſtitution unimpaired; chiefly owing to temperance, for neither example nor allurements could lead him off from a ſenſe of his duty, nor make him embrace thoſe pleaſures which in the end generally prove the ruin of heroes.

His modeſty was equal to all his other virtues, and although ſome of the Roman emperors have been celebrated for more clemency, and others for a more ſplendid appearance in the camp, yet Trajan contrived to join theſe virtues together in ſuch a manner, that he engaged the affections of all his ſubjects.

The firſt perſon that addreſſed him upon his aſcending the throne, was Plutarch, the celebrated philoſopher, and his maſter, who in a moſt ſenſible ſpeech, exhorted him to diveſt himſelf of all puerile connections, and make the intereſt of the people his ſole ſtudy. He recapitulated to him the errors of former emperors, and put him in mind of the neceſſity he was under to profit by their example. To diveſt himſelf of all mean, ſelfiſh views, and attend to ſuch things as was becoming his dignity, and conſiſtent with the intereſts of the people. He added, that Trajan had it in his power to make himſelf the greateſt of men; to entail immortal fame upon his memory, and to tranſmit his name to all ſucceeding ages, as a copy to be imitated by the great and the good. Above all things, he adviſed him to watch ſtrictly, and with the utmoſt circumſpection, over thoſe paſſions which are too apt to miſlead the judgment, and draw the mind from a ſenſe of duty, when it ought to be principally fixed upon it.

This

This advice was not loſt upon Trajan, for as he reſolved to make the laws the rule of his conduct, he told the præfect of the prætorian bands, when he gave him his ſword, to ſtab him dead with it if ever he did any thing inconſiſtent with his duty, but if not, to turn the point of it againſt the enemies of Rome, adding, at the ſame time, that the ſovereign who gives orders to his people for the regulation of their conduct, ought not to tranſgreſs them himſelf. Soon after his being declared emperor, he found himſelf under a neceſſity of engaging in a war with the Dacians, who, during the reign of Domitian, had made ſeveral irruptions into the empire. A general engagement enſued, in which the Romans were victorious, and the enemy were obliged to ſubmit to ſuch terms as Trajan thought proper to preſcribe, namely, that they ſhould pay an annual tribute to Rome, and acknowledge themſelves ſubjects of the emperor.

The war being thus apparently ended, Trajan marched back to Rome, where he was received amidſt the acclamations of the people, but ſoon after he found himſelf under the neceſſity of again taking the field. Decebalus, king of the Dacians, without paying any regard to the moſt ſolemn treaties, took the field with a large army, ſpreading deſolation wherever he came, without any regard to age or ſex.

During the beginning of the war, the Romans were reduced to great hardſhips, and ſome of their advanced parties being defeated, ſeveral of their generals were made priſoners, among whom was Longinus, who rather than be put to death by the enemy, laid violent hands on himſelf.

But nothing could damp the ſpirit of Trajan, who ſeemed to riſe ſuperior to every oppoſition.

He

He ordered a bridge to be built acroſs the Danube, a work of the moſt ſtupendous nature, but perſeverance enabled him to finiſh it, and ſoon after he annexed the wild uncultivated kingdom of Dacia to the Roman empire. Decebalus finding his army routed, and his kingdom ſeized on by the Romans, and at the ſame time being conſcious that he had no reaſon to expect mercy, after he had broke the moſt ſolemn treaties, put an end to his own life, and his head was carried to Rome in triumph.

Trajan having thus put an end to the war, returned to Italy, and the citizens of Rome received him with every diſtinguiſhing mark of reſpect, while the ſenate decreed him a triumph. Ambaſſadors were ſent to him from the tributary provinces, and ſuch as had not yet ſubmitted to the Roman yoke, ſeemed eager to put themſelves under his protection, or rather to unite their kingdoms to his dominions.

## LETTER XLVIII.

TRAJAN was ſo well acquainted with his duty as a ſovereign, that he had no ſooner reſtored peace to the empire, than he devoted the greateſt part of his time towards beautifying the city, and erecting ſuch ſtructures as were likely to be of the greateſt utility to the people. No vicious perſons were admitted to a ſhare of his friendſhip, for his leiſure hours were ſpent in the company of ſuch men as were an ornament to Rome. He had no ſuſpicion of any conſpiracies being formed againſt him, for he was conſcious of having diſcharged his duty rather as the father of his people, than like one who had a right to exact obedience from them.

Such was the character of Trajan during the former part of his reign, and that any alteration ſhould ever have taken place, muſt be aſcribed to ſome cruel, ill-minded perſons, who were equally enemies to peace and virtue.

A. D. 107. The Chriſtians were now become extremely numerous throughout the different provinces of the Roman empire, and although their religion forbad them giving any diſturbance to the government, yet thoſe who hated them on account of the integrity of their lives, repreſented them as perſons who ſought to deſtroy the emperor, and ſet up Chriſt for their king. Theſe perſecuted people had been obliged to meet together in the nights, and as they were under an indiſpenſible obligation of worſhipping Chriſt as their Lord, the pagan prieſts inſinuated, that all theſe nocturnal meetings were kept for no other purpoſe than to hatch ſchemes and plots of ſedition.

Trajan, notwithſtanding the natural clemency of his diſpoſition, was ſtrongly attached to the idolatrous worſhip of pagan deities, and therefore he publiſhed ſeveral edicts, commanding all the Chriſtians to ſacrifice to the gods under pain of death. The emperor's orders were executed with the moſt unrelenting ſeverity, many of the moſt eminent Chriſtian biſhops were put to death, and thouſands of their innocent followers were murdered in cool blood by the populace. This perſecution raged with great violence for ſome time, till Pliny, proconſul of Bithynia, wrote an epiſtle to the emperor, wherein he told him, that he had made the moſt diligent enquiry concerning the Chriſtians, and that all he could diſcover, was, that they met together on the firſt day of the week to worſhip Chriſt, whom they called God, and that they bound themſelves

ſelves by an oath not to do any injury to their neighbours. At the ſame time, Tiberianus, proconſul of Paleſtine, ſent notice to the emperor, that the Chriſtians were a peaceable body of people, and that he could not any longer, conſiſtent with the dictates of his conſcience, puniſh them in the manner they had hitherto been.

This had the deſired effect, for the edicts were in a manner recalled, none of the proconſuls being obliged to ſeek for the Chriſtians, but if any of them were ſo imprudent as to come publicly and make an open profeſſion of their religion, then they were to ſuffer death. About this time, the Parthians and Armenians revolted, ſo that the emperor was obliged to march againſt them, in order to bring them once more under the yoke of bondage.

Accordingly, he marched againſt them at the head of a numerous army, which he had brought under the moſt ſtrict and regular diſcipline. Armenia ſubmitted to him after making a feint reſiſtance, and then entering the kingdom of Meſopotamia, he forced the inhabitants to pay an annual tribute to Rome. Nor was he leſs ſucceſsful againſt the Parthians, for he not only reduced them to obedience, but likewiſe ſubdued all Chaldea and Babylon, at which place he croſſed the Euphrates in the ſight of the enemy, who did every thing to oppoſe his paſſage.

He continued his march to the city of Cetiſiphon, which ſubmitted to him on his approach, and from thence entered the extenſive kingdom of Perſia. His ambition or deſire of glory, ſeemed equal to that of Alexander's, for advancing to the Indian ocean, he ſubdued ſeveral nations, and added them to the Roman empire.

Theſe conqueſts, however, were more ſplendid than advantageous, for although they conveyed the idea of territories to Rome, yet nothing beneficial aroſe from them. They were too far from the capitol to be kept in a proper ſtate of ſubjection, and therefore no ſooner had the conqueror turned his back, than the people aſſerted their former rights and privileges.

During the time that Trajan was employed in theſe romantic expeditions, the Jews revolted and murdered all the ſubjects of the empire, who had the misfortune to fall into their hands. Deluded as they had hitherto been, they ſtill looked for the coming of the Meſſiah, who was to reſcue them from bondage, and in that they were encouraged by many impoſtors, who from time to time roſe up among them.

The Jews, ever ſince the deſtruction of their city, had been oppreſſed by the Roman emperors in the moſt cruel manner, under pretence that they were enemies to the ſtate, and therefore being drove mad by the rigour of their maſters, they broke out into ſuch extravagant acts as had ſcarcely ever been heard of. Neither age nor ſex eſcaped their malice, and it is even ſaid, that they eat the dead bodies of thoſe whom they murdered. Some of them they cauſed to be devoured by wild beaſts, and in general the moſt excruciating tortures were invented, as if they had been deſtitute of natural paſſions. But their fury was ſoon ſpent, and their enemies retaliated upon them the ſame cruelties as they had practiſed, putting them to death without any regard to their being either innocent or guilty.

Trajan had now obtained ſuch a large ſhare of military glory, that he reſolved to return to Rome; being obliged to march through Meſopotamia, he attacked

attacked Eddeſſa, and reduced it entirely to aſhes. That he might prevent the people in the Eaſt from forming another inſurrection, he cauſed Parthenaſpates to be crowned king of Perſia, and appointed another perſon to govern the provinces adjoining to the Caſpian ſea. This gave ſo much joy to the Roman people, that they began to conſider themſelves as under no further neceſſity of going to the eaſt to proſecute new conqueſts; and Trajan, who had almoſt exhauſted his conſtitution in the wars, reſolved to return to Rome, and make a proper enquiry into the adminiſtration of affairs during the time he had been abſent from Italy.

Adrian, one of his greateſt favourites, was left to govern in the eaſt, while Trajan continued his journey to Rome, where he doubted not that the people would receive him with all thoſe marks of honour that are ſo bewitching to the human mind. But he did not live to ſee the ſeat of the empire, for he was attacked with an apoplexy at Selinicia, where he died lamented by the people in general. His wife Plotina attended him in his laſt illneſs, as ſhe had always done in the camp, and ſome have thought that ſhe forged the will by which Adrian was appointed his ſucceſſor.

Such was the end of Trajan, in the ſixty third year of his age, and twentieth of his reign. He was certainly a man of great abilities, and in many things the beloved darling of the people. The Romans were ſo ſenſible of his mild adminiſtration, that it was common for them when a new emperor aſcended the throne, to wiſh that he might be a Trajan. As a military officer who commanded in the moſt dangerous wars, his character ſtands unimpeached, but ſtill his conqueſts added no new advantages to the Romans, for they A. D. 117.

were loſt almoſt as ſoon as acquired. The name of a conqueror does ſometimes more than his arms, and when Trajan died, the power and military courage, with which he had been diſtinguiſhed, ſeemed to vaniſh with the loſs of thoſe perſons that had been the object of it.

At his death the Roman empire was rather too large, and from that time it began to dwindle away, notwithſtanding the many efforts of his ſucceſſors to preſerve it from ruin. Trajan was formed by nature both for the field and the cabinet. When the intereſt of the public required his attendance in the moſt diſtant provinces, he never conſidered the hardſhips he had to undergo as too great, and no ſooner were the toils of war over, than he returned to the city and cultivated the arts of peace, which ought to be the principal object that every monarch has in view. In a word, he was an heroic warrior, a wiſe legiſlator, and might have been conſidered as a mild emperor, had not his cruelties againſt the innocent Chriſtians drawn a veil over all the other parts of his conduct. His example exhibits a ſtriking leſſon to princes in general, but more particularly to thoſe who being endowed with good natural parts, ſhut their eyes to the complaints and ſtate of their people, and ſuffer ſome of their moſt innocent ſubjects to be perſecuted in conſequence of falſe repreſentations being made of their conduct.

Had Trajan made the ſame enquiry into the character of the Chriſtians, that Pliny his ſervant did, he would never have ſuffered them to be put to death, in an illegal manner, but like many other ſovereigns, the innocent were deſtroyed before it was enquired into whether they had ſo much as given the leaſt offence.

No

No ſooner was the death of Trajan made public, than Adrian reſolved to avail himſelf of that circumſtance, and therefore marched with the utmoſt expedition to Rome; and had the good fortune to be declared emperor, by all the different orders of the people, before he had proceeded any farther than the city of Antioch. From Antioch, he wrote to the ſenate at Rome, informing them, that although his election to the purple might be conſidered as rather too haſty, yet he had not ſolicited for that high honour, and therefore he was determined to rule the Roman empire conſiſtent with the laws that had been made in favour of him. Accordingly he began to look upon ſome of the conqueſts made by Trajan as of too extenſive a nature ever to be of any conſequence to the republic, and that it was not of any ſervice to Rome to have more provinces ſubject to her than ſhe was able to govern.

This was undoubtedly a moſt wiſe and excellent reſolution, and, having ſettled the affairs of the Eaſt, he left Severus to command in Syria, with plenary powers to act in ſuch a manner that he ſhould not be accountable to any but the emperor or the ſenate. The aſhes of Trajan were carried in triumph before Adrian when he made his public entry into Rome, and it is almoſt impoſſible to expreſs the ſatisfaction that took place among all ranks of people, when they recollected in how mild and equitable a manner he had ruled the empire, while he ſat on the throne.

A column was erected to the memory of Trajan one hundred and forty feet high, upon which were engraven all the trophies by which he had diſtinguiſhed himſelf, and on the top of the pillar which

is ſtill remaining, his aſhes were placed in a golden urn. The honours paid to the memory of the emperor Trajan, were no more than what his merit had entitled him to, and it remains a convincing proof, that although the Romans had in a great meaſure degenerated from the virtues of their anceſtors, yet they were not totally diveſted of gratitude. From this benevolence let princes learn, that whatever may be their condition in life, and however numerous the praiſes beſtowed upon them by their favourites may be, yet when death has conſigned them to oblivion, their actions will be animadverted upon with the utmoſt freedom, and every thing will be reckoned among the number of vices that is not conſiſtent with the moſt rigid virtue. The glare of court luxury may acquire a temporary applauſe, the deſtruction of a nation may make a man be eſteemed a hero, and the ſevere execution of the rigid letter of the law may induce perſons of weak minds to conſider the ſovereign as the father of his people; but time, and the minute deliberations of the people, ſtrips off all theſe falſe diſguiſes, and repreſents the ſovereign not what he was conſidered by his more needy dependants, but what he was with reſpect to that rule of duty preſcribed for the regulation of his conduct.

Adrian had ſome difficulties to encounter when he aſſumed the purple, different from ſuch as had gone before him. His immediate predeceſſor Trajan had been both loved and honoured, and therefore it was neceſſary for him, in order to maintain his popularity, to ſet ſuch a right example before him for the rule of his conduct.

Adrian was one of the moſt accompliſhed men both in body and mind that was to be met with in that

that age. He was well acquainted with all martial exerciſes, and as a commander, he had made himſelf a compleat maſter of the military art. As a lover of literature, he had cultivated the powers of his mind, and compoſed verſes in the moſt elegant manner, on different ſubjects, in poetry. Nor was he leſs acquainted with the conſtitution of his country, for he often pleaded at the bar as an advocate, and his eloquence was admired by all who knew him. And his memory was as equally retentive as the ſolidity of his judgment, for he ſeldom ever read any thing, or heard a man's name mentioned without remembering it for ever after.

In moral duties, or the diſcharge of thoſe obligations, binding upon him as a man, he ſeemed to aim at nothing leſs than that of ſetting an example to all his ſubjects. The debts that were owing him, and which he might have recovered by law, he freely forgave, and leſt thoſe who owed him money ſhould ever be brought to any trouble, he ordered all the bonds and other obligations to be publicly burnt in the forum, before the whole body of the citizens.

All the injuries received by him while in a private ſtation were freely forgiven, alledging this as a reaſon for his moderation, that being advanced to the ſeat of regal dignity, laid him under an indiſpenſible obligation to forget things of a trifling nature. He took care that no perſon ſhould take a place in the ſenate unleſs their virtues entitled them to ſo diſtinguiſhed an honour, and his bounty extended to all ſuch needy perſons as ſeemed in want of his aſſiſtance. In a word, Adrian conſidered himſelf as the father, rather than the maſter of the Roman empire, and all his public or private actions ſeemed to flow

from a heart actuated by principles of the pureſt benevolence.

But notwithſtanding all thoſe virtues, yet he was not without vices to counterbalance them, or rather to prevent their ſhining with the moſt diſtinguiſhed luſtre. He revived the perſecutions againſt the Chriſtians, and a certain ſelfiſhneſs that ſeemed predominant in his nature, induced him to give rewards to thoſe vile miſcreants, informers, who had been proſcribed in the former reign. From this circumſtance we may learn, that there is no character in the world free from blame. The moſt virtuous, the moſt exalted even on the ſcore of virtue, have ſtill ſomething in them that ſeems to tarniſh their beſt actions, and leave ſucceeding ages to look upon their conduct in a problematical point of view. No man is truly great who is not truly good, and if none are truly good, then let ſovereigns never forget to keep a watchful eye over their hearts.

Adrian's firſt attempt in a public capacity, after he was choſen emperor, was to contract the bounds of the empire, and not pretend to a ſovereignty over nations, which in its own nature were no better than nominal. He knew that it was in a manner impoſſible to keep ſuch a ſtanding army on foot as would be able to oppoſe the incurſions of the barbarians; but no ſooner had he formed this ſalutary reſolution, than he was diſſuaded from it by his friends. They repreſented to him that he would thereby leſſen the glory of the Roman empire, by giving up thoſe provinces that had been conquered at a great expence of blood and treaſure, and ſink into contempt among the people.

Much

Much about this time, the Dacians, Sarmatians, and Alani, made ſeveral incurſions into the Roman provinces, and the bridge built by Trajan over the Danube, helped in a great meaſure to facilitate their conqueſts. Adrian, ſenſible that the ſame bridge which Trajan had built to enable him to oppoſe thoſe numerous barbarians, would be of equal ſervice to them in making daily inroads, ordered the bridge to be broken down, ſo that no fragments of it are now remaining. The barbarians who had been daily learning the art of war from the Romans, had taught them to fight from their example, were obliged to retire to their inacceſſible mountains, and uninhabited parts. Adrian returned to Rome, where he heard the diſagreeable news that a conſpiracy had been ſome time formed againſt him, by perſons from whom he expected the moſt implicit obedience.

This conſpiracy was deeply contrived, and that it might be attended with ſucceſs, the principal perſons concerned in it were of the conſular dignity. Their deſign was to have murdered Adrian, either while he was enjoying the diverſions of hunting, or while he was ſacrificing; but a diſcovery being made, they were all apprehended, and put to death by a decree of the ſenate. This was done in compliance with the requeſt of Adrian, who had promiſed that no ſenator ſhould be put to death by his order, and therefore to clear himſelf from all ſuſpicion of being concerned in their death, he left them to ſtand or fall by the laws.

Theſe inteſtine commotions being properly ſettled, and peace reſtored to the city, Adrian reſolved to viſit every province in the empire, a duty incumbent

bent upon every ſovereign, although too little practiſed. In conſequence of that reſolution, he croſſed the Alps and went to Gaul, where he ordered all the people to be numbered, and from thence having proceeded in the ſame manner through the conquered provinces of Germany and Holland, he came over to Britain. He had been informed that the natives of Scotland, then called Irene and Caledonia, were continually making incurſions into the Roman province in this iſland, he ordered a wall of earth to be thrown up between the mouth of the river Tyne in Northumberland, and the Eden in Cumberland. This, however, was only a weak attempt, for the northern barbarians broke through every oppoſition, and as ſoon as the ſpring ſeaſon returned, they broke down the wall, and ſpread deſolation wherever they came.

Having ſettled all the affairs in Britain, and placed proper governors to direct the people in that valuable province, he returned to Gaul, and from thence continued his journey to Rome, where he was received amidſt the acclamations of the people. Indeed his public conduct had been ſuch, that all the citizens looked upon him with veneration, but as no happineſs in this life can remain uninterrupted, ſo he received an account that the Parthians had again taken up arms.

This induced him to ſet out for Aſia, and in his way thither, he went to viſit Athens ſo long celebrated for being the ſeat of the muſes, and the mother of learning throughout the world. There he was initiated into the Eluſinian myſteries, the higheſt ſyſtem of the heathen mythology, and many other diſtinguiſhing honours were conferred upon him.

It

It was at Athens, that Granianus, proconſul of the Leſſer Aſia, came to meet the emperor, and he made ſuch a repreſentation in favour of the Chriſtians, that the emperor iſſued an edict, commanding all the governors of the provinces to refrain from perſecuting theſe innocent people. Nay, he even went ſo far as to propoſe that Chriſt ſhould be ranked among the Gods, but from that he was diſſuaded by his favourites, and more probably by the order of Divine Providence, which would not ſuffer the name of the Son of God to be placed in the ſame catalogue with idols.

From Athens he returned to Sicily, where he viſited Mount Ætna, and then went over to Naples, and from thence to Rome. Having ſettled the domeſtic peace of the city in a proper manner, he equipped a fleet, and ſailed to Africa, where he ordered public buildings to be erected, and reformed all ſuch abuſes as had crept into the government of the different provinces. He ordered the antient city of Carthage to be rebuilt, and that its former name might be conſigned to oblivion, he gave it the name of Adrianople, or the city of Adrian. From Africa he paſſed over to Italy, and having once more viſited Rome, he ſet out for Aſia, regulating all the abuſes that he found in the government of other princes. He travelled thro' Syria and Paleſtina to Egypt, where he cauſed the tomb of Pompey to be repaired in a proper manner. He ordered that the city of Jeruſalem ſhould be rebuilt in the moſt magnificent manner, and altho' the Jews ſeemed to conſider this act of the emperor as no ſmall mark of his royal favour, yet in the end, by their obſtinacy, it became deſtructive to them, and was attended with the moſt fatal conſequences.

The

The Jews, ever obſtinate and bigotedly attached to their own rights and ceremonies, could not bear the thought that Pagans and Chriſtians ſhould be permitted to ſettle in Jeruſalem, nor in any of the territories formerly belonging to it. Accordingly, they fell upon them without mercy, and both Romans and Chriſtians were murdered in the moſt cruel manner, altho' they had not given them any offence.

The Jews, as was cuſtomary with them, had been deluded by one who pretended to the character of the Meſſiah, and that he was come to deliver them from all their troubles. The name of this vile impoſtor was Bariocab, who pretended that he was the ſtar foretold by the falſe prophet Ballaam, and many of theſe deluded people followed him as if he had been that Divine Perſon promiſed to them in the writings of the Old Teſtament. An account of theſe maſſacres and murders were tranſmitted to Adrian while he was at Athens, upon his return to Rome, and therefore, in order to quell the inſurrection, he ſent Julius Severus, at the head of a powerful army, who deſtroyed their principal towns, and put to death above half a million of the inhabitants. Such as had not taken up arms were baniſhed to the moſt diſtant provinces, nor were they permitted to come within ſight of their native land. This may be conſidered as the laſt deſtruction of the Jews; for although they had been in a manner baniſhed by Titus, yet ſome of them till this period remained in Judea, but ever ſince that time they have been conſidered as vagabonds who had no fixed habitation.

The peace of the empire would have been now ſettled in a proper manner, had it been poſſible to prevent the barbarians from making incurſions into the

the Roman provinces, but no ſooner were the Jews ſubdued, than ſome of them entered Media, and ſpread deſtruction wherever they came.

Adrian, who was almoſt worn out with the hardſhips of war, rather than go in perſon to oppoſe thoſe barbarians, made peace with them upon very partial terms, by which they were induced to return once more to their inacceſſible mountains, and make themſelves ready for new invaſions as ſoon as an opportunity ſhould offer.

In the mean time the emperor reſolved to return to Rome, which accordingly he did, and was received by the people with every demonſtration of joy, eſpecially when they heard that he was to ſpend the remainder of his days with them He was now advanced in years, but nothing could divert his attention from the affairs of government, and his leiſure hours were ſpent in the company of his friends, with whom he converſed freely on the moſt abſtruſe matters in philoſophy.

In this manner the latter years of the emperor Adrian were ſpent, but ſtill not without a mixture of vices, for he aimed to be conſidered as infallible, and, in conſequence of that ridiculous notion, ordered ſome of the moſt ingenious artiſts to be put to death, becauſe they found fault with the public buildings conſtructed by him. But for all that, he had the moſt juſt notions of regal government, and got an edict publiſhed by the ſenate, whereby it was ordered that none of thoſe unhappy perſons called ſlaves ſhould be put to the torture when their maſters were found murdered in their houſes; a practice that had hitherto taken place among the Romans.

## LETTER XLIX.

ADRIAN, ever attentive to the welfare of the people, reſolved to provide for their happineſs, even after his death, and not leave them expoſed, as they had hitherto been, on every new election.

Accordingly he adopted, as his ſucceſſor, Marcus Antoninus, commonly called the Pious, and the vaſt qualifications of that extraordinary perſon remains a convincing proof of that ſound judgment by which the whole conduct of the emperor had been regulated. But the infirmities of Adrian daily increaſed, and ſo violently was he racked with pain, that he often endeavoured to perſuade thoſe who attended him to put an end to his life.

This horrid reſolution was conſiſtent with the depraved notions of the heathens in general, but for the honour of Antoninus let it be mentioned, that he ſaid all he could to perſuade him to be reconciled to his fate. At laſt, the ſeverity of his pain deprived him at times of his reaſon, and after dictating ſome verſes on the immortality of the ſoul, he expired in the ſixty-ſecond year of his age, crowned with honour, and lamented by the people in general.

Adrian, to all the exterior graces of a handſome perſon, added ſuch qualifications as are ſeldom found in one perſon. Well acquainted both with foreign and domeſtic laws, he reduced into one book all the acts of ſenate and edicts of the emperors.

This was of infinite ſervice to the people in general, and from his death till the total declenſion of Roman power, if the people were more corrupt in their

their lives than formerly, yet they had much better laws, and judges of greater learning and integrity. He left the Roman empire in a ſtate of perfect tranquillity at home, while abroad he was reſpected by his enemies, for even the barbarians trembled at his name.

Adrian having thus paid the debt of nature, he was ſucceeded in the purple by Marcus Antoninus, whom he had adopted for that purpoſe. A.D. 137. This great man was deſcended from a noble family, and born at Niſmes in Gaul, where his father commanded under the prætors. Great care had been taken of his education, and as ſoon as he had acquired a perfect knowledge of the Greek language and philoſophy, he ſet himſelf to ſtudy the laws and conſtitution of his country, with abilities that would have done honour to the higheſt ſtation in the univerſe; ſo great was his modeſty, that he began with diſcharging his duty in the moſt humble ſphere, and at laſt paſſed with applauſe through thoſe of a ſuperior nature. He was an eager ſtickler for the religion of the heathens, but at the ſame time no man ever diſcharged the duties of a ſovereign with greater fidelity to the intereſt of his people, who loaded him with accumulated honours. All his private property, as well as his paternal eſtate, he gave to the uſe of the public, and no perſon was advanced to any dignity under him, unleſs his merit entitled him to it. His wife Fauſtina complaining of his unbounded liberality, he told her, that no ſooner was he advanced to the purple, than all private vices forſook him, for from that time, nothing was to take place in his mind, but ſuch as related to the intereſts of the commonwealth.

In the whole of his conduct, he diſcovered ſuch excellent judgment, and ſuch an univerſal acquaintance with human nature, that he even ſeemed to profit by all the vices, and even failings of his predeceſſors. Altho' his paternal care extended itſelf to the utmoſt provinces in the empire, yet he thought that it was more conſiſtent with his duty to remain in the capitol, than to make an oſtentatious diſplay of his regal dignity, by viſiting the cities that lay at a conſiderable diſtance.

The barbarians who inhabited that part of Britain now called Scotland, made ſo many incurſions into the Roman province, ſouth of Adrian's wall, that ſome of the Britons in the interior parts joined with them, and therefore the emperor found himſelf under the neceſſity of ſending an army to oppoſe them, and they were again driven back to their inacceſſible mountains.

The Dacians revolted about the ſame time with the Britons, but they were likewiſe repelled, and many of their barbarous neighbours, who heard of the victories of the emperor, ſent deputies to him, deſiring him to take them under his protection. Some of the moſt ſuperſtitious among the pagans, particularly the prieſts, had cruelly murdered many of the Chriſtians; but the emperor, altho' ſtrongly attached to the idolatry of the heathens, yet publiſhed an edict, by which he commanded that none of thoſe oppreſſed and innocent people who lived without giving diſturbance to the government, ſhould be in the leaſt injured. He had the utmoſt averſion to war, unleſs when it was for the preſervation of the empire, but for all that, no part of his character was ever ſtained with ſo much as the bare imputation of cowardice. He took care that none of thoſe who attended him in the palace ſhould

abuſe

abuſe his clemency, by extorting bribes from thoſe who came to ſolicit favours; and, as a man of learning himſelf, he gave encouragement to all thoſe who by their merit ſeemed worthy of his notice.

Adrian had obliged him to adopt Marcus Aurelius for his ſon, and accordingly, having married him to his daughter, he ſent for Apollonius from Greece, to inſtruct his ſon-in-law in the principles of philoſophy. This ſhewed the good ſenſe of the emperor, for he was convinced that no perſon deſigned to govern an empire, could ever acquire too much knowledge.

During the ſummer, he uſually retired for a few weeks to a country-ſeat which he had at Lorium near Rome. It was there that he was ſeized with a violent diſorder in the ſeventy-fifth year of his age, after a moſt proſperous and peaceable reign of twenty-two, being upwards of fifty when he aſcended the throne. With reſpect to the character of this emperor, little can be added to what has already been ſaid. He was an eminent, nay, a moſt ſtriking example of what ſovereigns may do, when they can be prevailed upon to conſider the reciprocal connections that ſubſiſt by nature and policy between them and their ſubjects. Some princes make no other uſe of their power than to oppreſs their ſubjects, and gratify their own violent paſſions; but Marcus Antoninus ſeemed to live only for the people. He conſidered himſelf as only one part of the body politic, and he did not diſdain to hear, in the moſt attentive manner, the complaints of the poor and needy.

No perſon who ſolicited a favour ever went from his preſence with a denial, unleſs his requeſt was of a nature that it could not be granted without committing injuſtice. In a word, he was in the whole of his conduct an ornament to human nature, the honour

honour of the regal dignity, the father of the people, and a bright example to be copied after by ſucceeding princes.

Marcus Aurelius, whom Antoninus had adopted as his ſucceſſor, pronounced the funeral oration of his father-in-law, and took into partnerſhip with himſelf in the government, Lucius Verus, the ſon of Commodus, an intimate friend of Adrian's, and one whom he would have appointed his ſucceſſor, had not he been too old and infirm to manage the affairs of government.

Whatever monarchs may think when they admit any perſon to ſhare the government with them, yet every true philoſopher will conſider ſuch an act as inconſiſtent with true policy. If the co-adjutor, or perſon thus advanced as an aſſociate with the reigning prince, has the leaſt ſpark of gratitude remaining in his nature, he muſt be directed in all his actions by his generous benefactor, and, conſequently, his power is only nominal.

On the other hand, if he is a perſon of a domineering, ambitious ſpirit, he will not eaſily be brought under any ſort of controul, and the prince who advanced him to power and honour will find his own life in danger.

Marcus Aurelius had many virtuous qualifications, which, if operating without the reſtraint of an aſſociate, might have made the people happy, but Lucius Verus gave the moſt unbounded ſcope to his paſſions, which he indulged in ſuch a manner, that the people in general were corrupted thereby. This created diſcontents among the ſenators, for whatever was propoſed by the one emperor was oppoſed by the other.

This barbarians who inhabited the territories adjoining to the Roman empire, became every day more

more and more expert in the art of war, and their numbers encreaſing daily, in conſequence of their frugal way of living, they took the field, and ſpread deſolation wherever they came. The Parthians, under Vologeſus their king, penetrated into the interior parts of Syria, where he put all the Romans to the ſword, while the Catti croſſed the Rhine, but were driven back to their inhoſpitable mountains by Victorinus, who commanded in thoſe parts. As for the Britains, who lived in the northern parts of the iſland, and who had never ſubmitted to the Roman yoke, like their more puſillanimous brethren of the ſouth, the return of the ſeaſon ſerved only as a ſignal for them to commence freſh hoſtilities. They broke down the two walls erected by Julius Agricola and Adrian, and marched, without oppoſition, into the interior parts of Brigantia, ſince called Yorkſhire. There indeed they were met by Cabiſurnius, the Roman præfect in Britain, who drove them again to the north, tho' not till they had committed the moſt horrid murders.

Verus, who was as deſtitute of true courage as real virtue, yet could not help boaſting of his ſuperior knowledge in all military affairs, and therefore he propoſed going againſt the Parthians, who had ſpread terror and deſolation in many parts of the eaſt. Aurelius accompanied him part of the way, and not only gave him the beſt advice for the regulation of his conduct, but alſo appointed ſome of his moſt faithful friends to attend him in perſon, that he might diſcharge his duty, conſiſtent with the obligations he was under to the commonwealth. But nothing could perſuade Verus to hearken to the voice of reaſon, for the further he proceeded on his journey, the more abandoned he became to all ſorts of

of debauchery. This voluptuous way of living was even ſuperior to any thing the Romans had ever ſeen in the nations conquered by them, and while his lieutenant was gone againſt the common enemy, he ſpent great part of his time in the pleaſant gardens of Daphne, a moſt beautiful village near Antioch.

The ſucceſs that attended the Roman arms in the Eaſt was much greater than might have been expected, eſpecially when it is conſidered what a voluptuous perſon Verus was, but then it muſt be conſidered that his lieutenants were men of the moſt undaunted courage and the ſtricteſt integrity; they drove the Parthians back to their own country, and deſtroyed the antient and famous city of Babylon, ſpreading the terror of eagles wherever they came.

Verus, however effeminate and addicted to his pleaſures, reſolved to appropriate to himſelf all the honours acquired by thoſe brave men who fought under him, while he was indulging himſelf in every ſort of ſenſuality. Nothing leſs than a public triumph, to which he had not the leaſt title, would ſatisfy his ambition, and therefore, having appointed a perſon, in whom he thought he could confide, to be king of the Armenians, he returned to Rome, and was received with all the acclamations of joy by the people, who ſeldom look further into things than the exterior appearance.

Aurelius, who, during the time that Verius was in the Eaſt, had continued in Rome, applied himſelf to the diſcharge of all thoſe duties incumbent upon him as a ſovereign, and rectified many of the abuſes that had crept into the different departments of the ſtate. He never undertook any thing of importance without conſulting the ſenate; but although

though he did every thing in his power to make his ſubjects happy, yet he was ſorry to find that few perſons ever approached him without communicating to him accounts of the numerous vices of his colleague. In order, if poſſible, to reclaim Verus, he ſent him his daughter to Antioch, where they were married, but ſtill no good conſequences flowed from this act of the emperor's, although he did it for the beſt. Lucilla, the daughter of Aurelius, was a woman of an ambitious diſcerning ſpirit, and finding her huſband like herſelf, ſhe did every thing ſhe could to encourage him in his vices.

This was a moſt mortifying conſideration for the virtuous Aurelius, and what added ſtill to it was, that when Verus returned to Italy, where he thought to have awed him by his own preſence, he became more vicious than ever, nay even more ſo than he had been repreſented. His army while in the Eaſt had been infected with the plague, and the fatal contagion communicated itſelf to the inhabitants of the different cities through which they paſſed.

The miſery of the people ſubject to the Roman emperor was now ſo great as even to exceed deſcription. The provinces were in a manner depopulated by famine and peſtilence, while the barbarians penetrated even into Italy. The aid of ſuperſtition was called in to animate the people, but that not having the deſired effect, the prieſts ſtirred up the people to perſecute the Chriſtians, under pretence that the gods were angry becauſe they were ſuffered to worſhip their Saviour, and the only true God. This occaſioned a moſt violent perſecution of the Chriſtians, throughout all the provinces of the empire, ſo that many of the moſt

pious

pious men among them ſuffered martyrdom. In this reign, Juſtin, a celebrated philoſopher of the ſtoic ſect, having embraced the Chriſtian religion, drew up a moſt learned and elegant apology in favour of the perſecuted people, which he preſented to the emperor, but ſuch was the ſtrength of ungovernable popularity, that he was put to death.

Aurelius finding every thing in the utmoſt ſtate of confuſion, reſolved to oppoſe the enemy in perſon, and taking Verus along with him, came up with the Macommani, a fierce barbarous people, who had penetrated as far as Aquilla. There he obtained a ſignal victory over them, and in order to improve it to the beſt advantage, he purſued them acroſs the Alps, and returned to Italy with only the loſs of a few men, when compared with the difficulties he had encountered.

A. D. 169. Verius did not live to ſee Rome a ſecond time, for being ſeized with a moſt violent diſorder on his journey home, he died in the thirty-ninth year of his age. Many perſons, on account of the ſuddenneſs of his death, imputed it to poiſon or ſome other unfair means, but as nothing of that nature was ever proved againſt the perſons ſuſpected, ſo we may naturally look upon the report as having no real foundation in truth.

The death of Vernus obliged the emperor Aurelius to attend in the moſt aſſiduous manner to the affairs of government, and for that reaſon he married his daughter Lucilla, the widow of Vernus, to Claudius Pomponius, a man of the moſt ſtrict integrity and irreproachable life, although his parentage was rather mean, and his fortune ſmall. Indeed the emperor was ſo much in love with virtue,

tue, that he admired it in whatever ſtation he found it, let it be of ever ſo low or humble a rank.

The Marcommani, notwithſtanding their recent defeat at Aquileia, and the number of men they had loſt, made another incurſion into Italy, being joined by the Quadi, another nation of barbarians. For ſome time they proceeded on their journey without meeting with any interruption; but Aurelius having left Rome came up with them, and once more drove them beyond the Alps. The fatigues that the emperor underwent in this expedition were ſuch as might have been expected in ſuch climates as he paſſed through, but he was enabled to bear them in conſequence of reducing the principles of the ſtoic philoſophy to practice. Ever abſtemious, he taught moderation by his example, and patience ſo difficult in general to be exerciſed was practiced by the moſt common ſoldiers, who all ſtrove to vie with each other in imitating the conduct of their leader.

Having obliged the barbarians to accept of peace on the terms that he thought proper to propoſe, he returned to Rome, and ſet himſelf about reforming ſuch abuſes as had been too much countenanced during his abſence. He enquired into the characters and conditions of individuals, and either redreſſed their grievances or ſupplied their wants. He diſcouraged all ſorts of luxury, as tending towards corrupting the morals of the people, and, upon the whole, left nothing undone to make the people as happy as is conſiſtent with a ſtate of human nature.

Aurelius was one of thoſe ſovereigns who prefer the arts of peace to all the blandiſhments of war, but when the neceſſities of the ſtate required

his aſſiſtance he never heſitated to march in perſon at the head of the army. He loved peace, but nothing could induce him to court it in an inglorious manner, nor could he be perſuaded to remain in his palace, while the ſafety of his ſubjects required his preſence in the moſt diſtant provinces of the empire.

The barbarians, whom he had lately ſubdued, once more took the field, and made ſeveral incurſions into the moſt interior parts of Gaul. But Aurelius marching againſt them, croſſed the Danube on a bridge of boats, and reduced their villages and huts to aſhes. But theſe advantages were dearly bought, for the barbarians reſolving to make one vigorous effort to regain their liberties or periſh in the attempt, led the Romans by feigned retreats into ſome of the vallies at the foot of their mountains, where they were on the brink of being cut off.

The emperor, ſenſible of the diſtreſs of his army by this imprudent action, did all he could to animate his men, but ſtill they appeared dejected, for ſo violent was the heat, and ſo little were they acquainted with the country, that nothing but immediate deſtruction ſeemed before them. They were unable to advance, and they knew not in what manner to retreat, as their enemy had ſurrounded them on every ſide, and all was given up for loſt.

It is inconſiſtent with the dignity of hiſtory to inſert any thing that ſeems contrary to natural reaſon, although corroborated by the recent teſtimony of thoſe writers who lived near the time when the fates are ſaid to have taken place, and yet I am obliged to mention an incident which makes no ſmall figure in the writings of the fathers of the

fourth

fourth century. We are told that one of the Roman legions under the command of the emperor, was wholly compoſed of Chriſtians, which is not in the leaſt improbable, when we conſider how far the goſpel had ſpread even before that age. We are farther told, that this legion joined in prayer to heaven for rain to allay the raging calls of drought in the army, and that a plentiful ſhower immediately followed as an anſwer to their petition. At the ſame time, thunder and lightning ſo diſcomfited the enemy that they fled in the utmoſt diſorder, and were moſtly cut to pieces by the Romans. We are taught by the principles of our holy religion, not to look upon any external occurrence as a mark of the divine favour, becauſe God, for many wiſe ends unknown to us, often ſuffers vice to triumph, while the moſt virtuous are left to ſuffer all that malice can invent or cruelty inflict. But whatever truth may be in this narrative, certain it is, that the emperor conceived ſuch an opinion of the ſincerity of the Chriſtians, that he wrote to the ſenate in their favour, ordering all edicts againſt them to be utterly cancelled.

Having thus terminated the war, Aurelius thought to have ſpent the remainder of his days in tranquillity, and in ſupporting the rights of his ſubjects; but new diſſentions aroſe, of which it could not be ſuppoſed that he could have the leaſt ſuſpicion.

Moſt of the victories obtained over the Parthians had been owing to the prudence and conduct of Avidius Caſſius, who enjoyed a large ſhare of the emperor's favour. This commander being well acquainted with the military art, brought the army under proper diſcipline, and baniſhed from the camp every thing that tended towards corrupting

their morals. But ſtill ambition was his ruling principle, and therefore by his influence over the ſoldiers, he got himſelf proclaimed emperor while he commanded in Syria.

In order to ingratiate himſelf with the people, he propagated that he was deſcended from the famous Caſſius, who had aſſiſted in murdering Julius Cæſar, and that his ſole intention was to reſtore the Roman people to thoſe privileges of which they had been ſo long deprived by uſurpers and tyrants. By ſuch pretences, and at the ſame time giving out that Aurelius was brought over to his party, many people of the eaſt eagerly flocked to his ſtandard. On the other hand, Aurelius told the ſoldiers, that his love for the Roman people was ſo great, that he had no objection to diveſt himſelf of the ſovereignty, if another more properly qualified could be found to ſucceed him.

Avidius, who knew that unleſs he improved the advantages he had gained, he would never be able to get his title as emperor recognized by the Roman ſenate, marched into Greece, in order to bring thoſe provinces over to his intereſt, but his lieutenants who could not bear with his haughty diſpoſition, entered into a conſpiracy againſt him, and he was aſſaſſinated by the ſoldiers. His head being cut off it was brought to the emperor, who ſo far from teſtifying his approbation of the death of a Roman, who had fallen a ſacrifice to his ambition, ordered it to be interred in the moſt honourable manner. Such as had joined in the conſpiracy with Avidius, were in general pardoned, nor were any put to death, for the moſt obnoxious were only baniſhed for a few months, and then recalled, and reinſtated in their former rights and privileges.

Soon

Soon after this, the emperor went on a journey to the East, when his wife, the empreſs Fauſtina, died in conſequence of a violent diſtemper, with which ſhe had been ſeized. She was a woman of an extreme looſe character, and many of her actions ſeemed to reflect diſhonour on the emperor, but either his natural goodneſs of heart, or the regard he had for the character of his wife, prevented him from taking ſuch advantages of the public clamour, as he otherwiſe might have done. He ordered that ſhe ſhould be interred with all the honours peculiar to her rank, and the ſenate decreed a public triumph to her memory, merely from their motives of reſpect to the emperor.

## LETTER L.

WE have already ſeen how attached this emperor was to the civil intereſts of the people, nor was he leſs careful of learning, for on his return from the eaſt, he viſited Athens, and reformed ſeveral abuſes that had crept into the public ſchools. Such of the profeſſors as were moſt celebrated for their extenſive knowledge of the ſciences, he advanced to great honours, and ſettled upon them genteel ſalaries. From Athens he proceeded to Rome, after he had been abſent eight years, and to give the people a convincing proof of his real benevolence, he publiſhed an edict remitting all the debts owing to the public treaſury during the laſt ſixty years.

As he found himſelf advancing in years, he admitted his ſon Commodus as a partner with him in the empire, and retiring to one of his moſt delightful country ſeats, he devoted his time to ſtudy and

contemplation, from whence he received ſuch pleaſure as the virtuous only can feel. The learned men of every denomination throughout the empire were more immediately taken notice of by him than by any of his predeceſſors, for he knew the value of literary merit, having made great progreſs as an author, as appears from his moſt excellent writings. His frugal manner of living enabled him to do many good actions, and happy is that prince or even peer who follows ſo bright an example.

But this moſt excellent of men, and truly great emperor, did not long enjoy his delightful ſtate of tranquillity, for news was brought that thoſe numerous barbarians, the Scythians, had taken up arms, and were ravaging the frontier provinces of the empire.

The love of his people was too deeply rooted in his heart to ſuffer him to remain inattentive to any thing that related to their ſafety. He reſolved to take the field, and when he communicated his intentions to the ſenate, they begged that as his life had been ſo precious to them, he would leave them the beſt advice he could give. This he complied with, and ſpent three days in delivering lectures, inculcating the pureſt morality as the rule of their future conduct in life. He told the ſenate that he had no property of his own, and although they offered him the public money to defray the expence of the war, yet he would have it looked upon as the property of the whole community, and not of himſelf as an individual. Having taken leave of the ſenate and the people in the moſt affectionate manner, amidſt the lamentations, bleſſings, and prayers of thouſands of his people, he marched againſt the enemy, and notwithſtanding his advanced

vanced age, yet his preſence, as well as his example, enabled the ſoldiers to oppoſe a thouſand difficulties, in climbing mountains, foording rivers, cutting down woods, and preventing themſelves from being ſurrounded by the enemy, who knew every place in the country.

He drove the barbarians back to their inhoſpitable deſerts, and during two years that he continued in thoſe parts, he took every precaution to prevent their future incurſions; but a life ſo valuable, and too much ſo for the Romans, was now drawing to a period. During his march, the third year, to oppoſe the Scythians, he was taken ill at Vienna, and, although neither afraid to die, nor fretful againſt Divine Providence, yet when he conſidered the unpromiſing conduct of his ſon Commodus, he was filled with anxiety both for him and the people.

Tortured with theſe thoughts, he ſent for as many of his attendants as could be admitted into the chamber, when the dying emperor addreſſed them in words to the following import:

"My dear friends, I am now going to retire "from the theatre of this world, where I have "endeavoured to act my part according to the beſt "of my judgment. My ſon will now loſe a father "in me, but my dear friends, let me beg that you "will all be fathers to him, ſo that when I am no "more, he may be more happy than when I was "with him. Teach him to deſpiſe riches any "farther than they can be uſeful, and that no "prince can be ſo ſecure as he who reigns as an "object of veneration in the hearts of his people. "Adviſe him to avoid pride, for that generally "ends in cruelty, and few cruel princes live long. "If you attend to what I have now told you, you

" will have an emperor formed by yourſelves, and " you will reap the benefit thereof as long as he " lives."

He had ſcarce done ſpeaking when the violence of his diſorder encreaſed ſo faſt, that he was obliged to deſire them to withdraw, and next day he expired, to the inexpreſſible grief of every lover of virtue, and the irreparable loſs of the Roman people.

Such was the end of an emperor who ſeemed formed to acquire ſolid glory, and real greatneſs. Not the glare of conqueſt, but the approbation as aroſe from the hearts of ſuch as was made happy under his government. Glory ſeemed to leave Rome with the greateſt man that ever ſat upon the throne: nature had done her beſt to form a compleat emperor, and his innate qualifications had been illuſtrated and brought to a ſtate of perfection by the moſt excellent learning, regulated by judgment and prudence.

Virtue was, by his example, wrought up to the utmoſt height, but from that time it began to decline. From that period learning was more and more neglected. The Roman language declined in conſequence of the encouragement that was given to the Greek, and betwixt a contention which was the moſt ſuperior both were neglected, and both ſunk down to a barbarous jargon. Their hiſtorians from this period were no better than verbal narrators, who delivered their accounts of events in the moſt lifeleſs frigid manner, and ſtupidity ſeemed to be advancing faſt towards gaining a ſuperiority over the mind.

Marcus Aurelius died in the fifty-ninth year of his age, after a moſt glorious reign of nineteen years and ſome few days.

No

No ſooner was the death of this moſt excellent emperor made public at Rome, than the people paid that tribute of tears to his memory, which his virtues had a right to demand. They were at the ſame time unanimous in the choice of his ſon as his ſucceſſor, and the election was confirmed by the ſenate and the army. A. D. 180.

Commodus was only about nineteen years of age when his father died, and as he was very much attached to trifling diverſions, eſpecially ſuch as depended upon dexterity, and as his mother was a woman of a looſe character, ſo the people circulated a report that he was not the ſon of Aurelius, but of a gladiator, whom Fauſtina had admitted to a ſhare of her bed, while the emperor was about one of his expeditions. But his attention to theſe exerciſes led him to neglect thoſe of a more important nature; for wantonneſs, cruelty, and every ſpecies of vice, ſeemed ſo interwoven in his character, that he became daily more and more a ſlave to them.

As is common on the commencement of every new reign, he was received by the people with the greateſt applauſe, and they began to imagine that he would imitate the virtues of his father. But thoſe hopes ſoon vaniſhed, and the ſon of the moſt virtuous emperor that had ever graced the regal dignity, plunged himſelf into the moſt odious and unnatural crimes; for he ſeduced the daughters of the moſt eminent citizens, and even committed inceſt with his own ſiſter.

Every place of truſt, honour or profit was conferred upon wretches like himſelf, who had no regard to the intereſts of the people, and as they were his companions in unlawful pleaſures, ſo they ſtrove to enrich themſelves by every cruel action that they

could invent or reduce to practice. His principal favourite (for like all weak princes he muſt have one) was Perennius, a mean, avaritious wretch, who oppreſſed the people in ſo cruel a manner, that a dangerous conſpiracy was formed againſt the emperor.

Lucilla, his ſiſter, with her huſband Pompeianus, were concerned in this dangerous affair, and one Quintianus, a deſperate fellow, was employed to aſſaſſinate him. Quintianus, however, acted in ſo imprudent a manner, that he was taken into cuſtody before he had an opportunity of perpetrating the fact, and in order to avoid the torture, he made an ample diſcovery of all his accomplices.

In conſequence of this information, Quintianus himſelf, with Lucilla and Pompeianus, were publicly executed, and many of them who were perfectly innocent, ſhared the ſame fate, while Perennius ſeized on their eſtates, and appropriated the whole rents of them to his own uſe, not doubting but he would have it in his power to make himſelf emperor. To facilitate his ſcheme, he endeavoured to bring over ſome of the legions to his party; but the emperor, who now ſeemed to begin to have ſome regard for his own honour and intereſt, ordered both him and his party to be put to death.

The detection and ſuppreſſion of thoſe conſpiracies might have awakened Commodus to a ſenſe of duty, and convinced him of the obligation he was under to imbibe the virtues of his father; but inſtead of that, his ſecurity only encouraged him in the commiſſion of freſh crimes, and freſh conſpiracies were daily forming againſt him. So true was that ſaying of the late emperor, that no prince could be ſo ſafe, although ſurrounded by numerous armies of guards and partiſans, as he who acquired by acts of benevolence

benevolence the good will and affection of his ſubjects.

A violent inſurrection broke out in Spain under the direction of one Maturnus, a ſavage barbarian, who ravaged ſeveral of the Roman provinces, and even aſpired at the regal dignity. This ſcheme, however, had not the deſired effect, for by ſome acts of imprudence the whole was diſcovered, and the principal perſons concerned in it were firſt put to the torture and then executed.

It was remarkable of Commodus, that although he could not conduct any affairs of ſtate without a favourite, yet moſt of thoſe who obtained the largeſt ſhare of his friendſhip and confidence, fell in the end a ſacrifice to his ungovernable paſſions. Some of thoſe whom he had raiſed to the higheſt honours, were in an inſtant ordered not only to be degraded, but alſo, at the ſame time, to ſuffer by the hands of the common executioner.

Nor did his own relations fare better, for he ordered his wife Criſpina, and Fauſtina, his father's couſin, to be put to death, as if they had been common malefactors, for no other reaſon than that he might get rid of the one, and poſſeſs himſelf of the fortune of the other. Nay, he even went ſo far as to pardon thoſe who committed the moſt atrocious crimes, in conſequence of their paying him a ſum of money. In a word he became as ridiculous as Caligula, and as cruel as Domitian; for, not content with the ordinary and common honours that were paid him, he ordered that the people ſhould rank him among the gods, and offer to him divine ſacrifices.

The neglect of public affairs, owing to the conduct of the emperor, encouraged the barbarians to make new incurſions into the frontier provinces,

among

among whom the moſt active ſeems to have been the Scots and Picts, who invaded the ſouthern part of Britain, and demoliſhed the greateſt part of Adrian's wall. It is true, theſe barbarians, with ſeveral others, were repulſed almoſt as ſoon as they made their appearance, but the emperor was now become ſo odious to all ranks of people, that his deſtruction ſeemed in a manner unavoidable. Like Domitian, he kept a liſt of thoſe whom he intended to put to death in his cloſet, and that being diſcovered by a boy, whom he kept for an unnatural purpoſe, it was brought to Marica, one of his concubines. The conſequence was, that he was ſoon after diſpatched in the thirty-firſt year of his age, to the great joy of the Roman people.

A. D. 192. Commodus being thus diſpatched, the people made choice of Helvius Pertinax to ſucceed him, one of the moſt extraordinary perſons in the age in which he lived. His father had been a ſlave, but ſuch were the merits of the ſon, that from the moſt obſcure original, he aroſe gradually to the higheſt dignity without a friend at court to ſupport his intereſt. Beſides ſeveral expeditions againſt the Parthians, he had been ſent over to command in Britain, where he endeavoured to correct ſuch abuſes as had crept into the army, but his zeal for the public ſervice had near coſt him his life.

The ſoldiers, who had long been accuſtomed to licentiouſneſs, mutinied againſt him, and he was left for dead on the ſpot, along with ſome inferior officers, who were actually ſlain. But notwithſtanding the great loſs of blood from the wounds he had received, yet he recovered, and by a perſeverance in duty peculiar to one of his undaunted ſpirit,

ſpirit, he reſumed his former authority, and brought the legions under a proper diſcipline.

Having driven the northern barbarians home to their barren mountains, and ſettled the affairs of Britain in a proper manner, he was recalled, and ſent to command in Africa, where ſeveral of the tributary ſtates had revolted againſt the government. From Africa he returned to Italy, and, being tired with the fatigues of war, he reſolved to ſpend the reſt of his days in retirement, but Commodus, who knew not how to govern, made him præfect of the city.

He accepted of this high office with the utmoſt reluctance, for, being well acquainted with the abandoned character of the emperor, he doubted not but he would fall a ſacrifice to his cruelty, as many other worthy perſons had done. That ſuch were his ſuſpicions, is evident, from the manner in which he received the members of the ſenate who came to congratulate him on his new dignity as emperor, the ſame night that Commodus was murdered. He told them that he had long expected death in a violent manner, and that altho' his conſcience convinced him that he had done his duty to ſerve his country, yet he was willing to ſubmit to his fate with a becoming reſignation.

The deputies did not leave him long in ſuſpence, for, taking him to the camp, he was proclaimed amidſt the ſhouts of the army, people, and ſenators. All ranks of people, not only in Rome, but even throughout the moſt diſtant provinces, approved of the election, and Pertinax began his reign in the moſt proſperous manner.

He was now far advanced in years, but he took care to diſcharge every part of his duty with ſo much wiſdom

wiſdom and moderation, that the citizens began to conſider him as another Aurelius. The mean hireling courtiers, who, by their councils, had corrupted the mind of the late emperor, were puniſhed in the moſt exemplary manner, and the ſums of which they had robbed the people were ſeized and brought into the public treaſury, in order to ſupport the government againſt the common enemy.

He ordered the buffoons, who had been ſo much careſſed by Commodus, to be ſold as ſlaves, well-knowing that they corrupted the minds of youth, and he endeavoured to put the prætorian bands under ſuch regulations, as ſhould prevent them from injuring the citizens. Every perſon was admitted to his preſence who had any thing to offer for his immediate conſideration, and that juſtice ſhould be admitted to the whole empire, he never neglected an opportunity of attending the ſenate. He was ſo much feared by the barbarians near the frontier provinces, that they trembled at his name, and were glad to lay down their arms rather than provoke ſuch an experienced warrior to wreak his vengeance upon them. But all his attempts to reform the ſtate proved ineffectual. The prætorian bands had been ſo long accuſtomed to live in the moſt licentious manner, that they conſidered themſelves injured by the emperor, whom they repreſented as avaricious, and as one, who, under the pretence of reforming abuſes, wanted only to enrich himſelf. Theſe turbulent ſoldiers reſolving to ſet up an emperor of their own, made choice of Maternus, a ſenator, to be emperor, but he refuſed to accept of the honour, and then they offered the purple to Falco, another of the ſenators, who was not ſo averſe to the honour, but the ſenate would have put him to death, had not Pertinax intereſted himſelf in his favour, and ſaved him

him from the rage of the people, although he was his moſt inveterate and profeſſed enemy.

Diſappointed in theſe ſchemes, the prætorian ſoldiers reſolved not to act any longer in a hidden manner, and therefore marching in a body, they ſurrounded the palace, while all thoſe whoſe duty it was to have protected the emperor, fled, and left him expoſed to the malice of his enemies.

Some of his friends would have perſuaded him to make his eſcape, and throw himſelf into the arms of the people, but he told them his whole conduct had been free from blame, and therefore he was reſigned to his fate.

He had ſome hopes that his preſence would intimidate the ſoldiers, but he was miſtaken, for they had been too long accuſtomed to living in the moſt licentious manner, to pay any regard to the moſt unſpotted virtue. No ſooner had he made his appearance at the gate, than one of the ſoldiers ſtruck him with a lance, and ſoon after he was murdered, after receiving a great number of wounds. Such of his attendants as ſtood by him were murdered in the ſame manner, nor did any of his family eſcape except his ſon and daughter, who had the good fortune to ſave themſelves by flight.

Such was the end of Pertinax, after a reign of only three months, in which time he gave the people a ſpecimen of that happineſs which they had reaſon to expect from his moderate and equitable adminiſtration. Few men ever roſe to ſo high a ſtation by the mere force of merit, and we read of but few who came to a more unworthy fate. It may ſerve to ſhew, that a ſtanding army and the liberties of the people are in their own nature incompatable.

The

A. D. 192. The names of ſome individuals, who have been in different ages and nations advanced to the regal dignity, are of little more ſervice than to fill up a blank in chronology, and point out the ſteps neceſſary for directing the ſtudent in his journey. Some indeed have made themſelves great by their crimes, and acquired a name at the expence both of honour and conſcience. Many of the latter Roman emperors were a diſgrace to human nature, and it muſt be acknowledged that the vices of the people were ſuch, that neither could find fault with each other.

No ſooner had the ſoldiers murdered Pertinax, than they marched out of the city to join their companions, and not doubting but the people would endeavour to revenge the death of the emperor, they took care to fortify their camp in the ſtrongeſt manner they could.

Finding that none of the people took up arms againſt them, they became more bold than ever, and even proceeded to ſuch a ſcandalous height in licentiouſneſs, that they offered the empire to ſale to thoſe who would bid moſt for it. Shameful as this propoſal was, yet two men were found to bid for it, namely, Sulpicius, the ſon-in-law of Pertinax, and Didius, a celebrated lawyer, and eſteemed the richeſt man in the city, moſt of his wealth having been acquired in the moſt iniquitous manner.

Didius was ſitting at dinner with his friends when he received the news that the empire was put up to ſale, and not doubting but he would have it in his power to offer more than any other perſon, he left his houſe and ſet out for the camp. He was immediately received by the ſoldiers with the utmoſt applauſe, for although Sulpicius had got there before him, yet having nothing but promiſes to offer,

Didius

Didius was taken into the camp by the help of a ladder, and every one ſwore to ſtand by him to the laſt. The ſoldiers, who were ten thouſand in number, marched with their mock emperor to the city, but the people poured out upon him the moſt horrid execrations as he went along.

Few of the ſenators attended to receive him, and when he ſpoke to them, which was in a very laconic manner, they ſeemed to look upon him in the moſt contemptible light. The ſenate, however, were too weak and intimidated to diſpute his title, after he had diſtributed a million of money among the ſoldiers, and therefore they gave their ſuffrage without any oppoſition.

Didius was now in the fifty-ſeventh year of his age, and as moſt of his former time had been ſpent in attending to buſineſs, he longed to taſte the ſweets that ariſe from an enjoyment of affluence, without any regard to thoſe duties incumbent upon him as the ſovereign of Rome. He was naturally eaſy in his temper, but that ſerved rather to injure him than to promote his intereſt.

His vaſt affluence had been acquired by avarice, nor could he diveſt himſelf of that paſſion, even after he was advanced to the ſtate of regal dignity, He began to regret that his fortune had been ſquandered away among the ſoldiers, and as he thought of abridging their pay, they were ſo enraged that they reſolved to devote him to deſtruction. Indeed, there was no great wonder the ſoldiers ſhould have hated him, for he was utterly unacquainted with the military art, and an entire ſtranger to thoſe qualifications neceſſary to conſtitute the character of one who may be ſuppoſed under the neceſſity of commanding armies.

It is at leaſt ſome comfort to a prince to find that when he is rejected or deſpiſed by one body of his ſubjects, that he is eſteemed by the other. But Didius had not this conſolation, for he was equally hated by the people and the ſoldiers. Indeed, his own mind was ſo vain, and ſo little acquainted with the ſtimulating motive that lead to true glory, that when the citizens mocked him, he would turn to them and beg their pardon in the moſt abject manner.

But it could not be ſuppoſed that ſuch a puſillanimous wretch would be ſuffered to remain in ſafety at Rome, while ſo many able generals were commanding in the provinces. The two moſt accompliſhed of theſe commanders were Septimius Severus, who was præfect of the German legions, and Poſenius Niger, governor of Syria. Niger, who had acquired the good-will of the army, was proclaimed emperor of the eaſt, where his title was recognized, and acknowledged by all the governors of the provinces.

Severus, who was an African by birth, did not loſe any opportunity of ingratiating himſelf with the ſoldiers under his command; and as he knew that Pertinax was their great favourite, ſo he inſinuated that his ſole deſign in aſpiring to the purple was to revenge the death of that emperor.

Didius, who had never ſeen a military engagement, was terribly alarmed when he heard that Severus was marching againſt him, and therefore he procured the ſenate, by the influence of bribes, to declare him an enemy to the commonwealth. But that was no more than matter of form, and forms are of little ſervice when oppoſed by power. Diſtracted in his own mind, and not knowing whoſe advice

advice to take, he at laſt reſolved to make Severus his partner in the empire.

This propoſal, however, was rejected by Severus, and the ſenate, who deſpiſed Didius, told him that if he could not command the legions, he was not fit to govern the empire. Accordingly, the conſuls having convened the ſenate, ordered Severus to be proclaimed emperor, and Didius, who had purchaſed the empire, was obliged to ſubmit to an ignominious death.

He met death in the ſame puſillanimous manner in which he had lived, for when the executioners ſeized him, he cried like a child, but they paid no regard to his tears, nor ſhewed him any other reſpect than if he had been a common malefactor. His head was cut off and placed on the front door of the ſenate, where he had often pleaded as an advocate, and his name was ordered to be erazed out of all the public records.

## LETTER LI.

AS ſoon as Didius was diſpatched, the ſenate ſent deputies to invite Severus to take upon him the government of the empire, and accordingly he marched to Rome with the utmoſt expedition. He was now about forty years of age, and being a general of the moſt conſummate prudence, he ordered that all the ſoldiers of the prætorian guards ſhould lay down their arms, and meet him without the gates of the city. A. D. 195.

Mortifying as ſuch an order muſt have been to men who had long made and unmade emperors when they pleaſed, yet they were obliged to comply, and meet the emperor with branches of laurel in their

their hands, which they did as a token of their ſubmiſſion to his authority. But Severus was too well acquainted with their practices to admit them to any ſhare of his friendſhip or confidence. He ordered them to be ſtripped of all their military habits, and to be baniſhed from Rome, to which they were not to return under the ſevereſt penalties. This act of his power was conſiſtent with the obligations he was under to provide for his own ſafety, and as ſoon as they were gone, he marched into the city, attended by thoſe legions who had, for ſeveral years, diſtinguiſhed themſelves under his command.

His acceſſion to the empire, altho' not attended with much difficulty, yet did not ſeem to prognoſticate the moſt promiſing hopes. By birth an African, the Romans conſidered him as one too ſubtile to be truſted, and doubted not but he would, by the moſt refined ſtrokes of policy, put an end to the few remaining privileges they had left. Indeed, people ſeldom know the nature of liberty till they have loſt it, and they endeavour to regain it when it is too late.

Severus found himſelf under an abſolute neceſſity of marching to the Eaſt againſt Niger, who was conſidered as an emperor in that part of the world, and, in order to facilitate his meaſures, he ſeized the children of thoſe who were in Niger's army, in order to keep them as hoſtages till he ſaw what would be the conſequences of the war. He ſecured, by ſeveral favours, the friendſhip of Clodius Albinus, commander of the army in Britain, and at the ſame time gave him reaſon to believe that he would adopt him for his ſucceſſor in the empire. Having taken theſe prudent meaſures, he began his march to the Eaſt, and met Niger on the plains of Jeſſus, where Alexander defeated Darius, and overthrew the Perſian

ſian monarchy. Severus obtained a complete victory; for the ſoldiers who fought under Niger were too much ſunk in all manner of ſenſuality to reſiſt the courage of thoſe brave men who had acquired laurels under their intrepid commander in Europe. The unfortunate Niger was taken priſoner, and his head being cut off, was fixed on a pole, and carried thro' the army as a trophy of victory. The Parthians and ſome other eaſtern nations had taken up arms in defence of Niger, or rather for the ſake of plunder; but Severus marched againſt them, and obliged them once more to ſubmit to the Roman yoke.

Peace being eſtabliſhed in the Eaſt, Severus reſolved to deſtroy Albinus, for all the promiſes he made to him were merely of a fallacious nature, and ſuch as he had no intention of adhering to, ſo as his expedition was attended with ſucceſs. He ſent ſome perſons privately to Britain, promiſing them great rewards if they would aſſaſſinate him, but Albinus had ſecret notice given him of their intentions, and therefore reſolved to be upon his guard.

In the mean time, Severus marched from Aſia to Gaul, where he was met by Albinus at the head of a numerous army, who had unanimouſly declared him emperor. For ſome time the contending parties kept at a diſtance from each other, but at laſt there being an indiſpenſible neceſſity that they ſhould come to a general engagement, one of the moſt bloody battles was fought that we meet with in hiſtory.

The engagement began in the morning, and laſted till night, when Severus fell from his horſe, and his troops began to give way. In that critical moment, Sextus, one of thoſe who commanded under Severus,

Severus, advanced with a body of reſerve that had been kept back to cover a retreat, endeavouring to take the preſent advantage of both, and make himſelf emperor.

The troops under the command of Severus took freſh courage when they ſaw Sextus advance, and being ſtrangers to his real motives, they fought with ſuch fury, that Albinus's forces were defeated, and himſelf ſlain. Severus ordered his body to be treated in the moſt ignominious manner, and ſuch of the ſenators as were taken priſoners, he ordered to be put to death, and their bodies to be quartered.

Severus, having thus triumphed over his moſt formidable enemy, left Gaul, and ſet out for Rome, not depending upon the fidelity of the people, but the power of a ſtanding army, whom he had trained up, and whom he loaded with the treaſure ariſing from the ſale of ſuch eſtates as had been forfeited. From Rome he marched to the Eaſt, in order to oppoſe the Parthians, and left the government to the care of Plautina, a man whom he had brought over to his intereſt, by marrying his ſon Caracalla to his daughter.

His ſucceſs in the Eaſt was equal to what might have been expected from ſo experienced a commander, for he not only reduced the Parthians, who had taken up arms, to obedience, but alſo carried his conqueſts throughout all Syria and Egypt, obliging thoſe nations to ſubmit to the Roman yoke, and pay an annual tribute to the emperor. Upon his return to Rome, he was received in the uſual manner by the people, namely, with every demonſtration of joy, but Plautina, who had ſome thoughts of making himſelf emperor, employed a tribune to murder both him and his ſon Caracalla.

Perhaps

Perhaps this event might have taken place, had not the tribune gone and informed Severus, who ſent for Plautina, and upbraided him for his perfidy. Plautina confeſſed his guilt, and the emperor, to give an inſtance of his clemency, reſolved to pardon him, but his ſon Caracalla followed him out of the palace and ſtabbed him dead.

The next thing we find this emperor engaged in was the reformation of many abuſes that had crept into the government of ſuch cities as lay near Rome, all of which he viſited in perſon, and diſplaced ſuch magiſtrates as, by their conduct, had made themſelves moſt obnoxious.

The Caledonians and other northern barbarians who inhabited that part of Britain now called Scotland, had made ſo many incurſions into the provinces of the ſouthern part of the iſland, that the Romans were on the brink of deſtruction, when the emperor reſolved to viſit the place, and put an end to theſe diſorders. In order to make his two ſons acquainted with the art of war, he took them along with him, leaving Geta to command in the ſouthern provinces of Britain, while Caracalla accompanied him to the North.

The hardſhips ſuſtained in his march to the North were the greateſt that we find mentioned in hiſtory, and, as he found it utterly impoſſible to bring the Picts and Caledonians to ſubmit to the Roman yoke, he took an oath of homage from thoſe who inhabited Valentia, that part of Scotland lying between the Forth and the Tweed; he built the famous wall ſtill known by his name, extending from the Solwey Frith to the eaſtern part of Northumberland, near the influx of the Tyne into the German ocean. Some parts of this wall are ſtill remaining, and may ſerve to convince us, in the preſent age, that the

Romans

Romans were the moſt indefatigable people in all their undertakings.

Having received the ſubmiſſion of ſome of the unconquerable northern barbarians, who only waited for new opportunities to begin their incurſions into the Roman province: Severus returned to York, then one of the moſt celebrated cities in Britain. Worn out with the fatigues of war, and diſtreſſed in his mind to ſee the conduct of his ſon Caracalla, ſo inconſiſtent with the ſtation for which he was deſigned, he began to ſink under the decay of nature, and, to add to his misfortune, he received the diſagreeable news that the ſoldiers had revolted, and declared his ſon emperor of Rome. Severus no ſooner heard this mortifying news than, raiſing himſelf from his bed, he commanded his ſon and thoſe who adhered to him to be brought immediately into his preſence. The reputation he had gained obliged them to comply, and, coming before the emperor in the moſt ſubmiſſive manner, he firſt put them in mind of their duty, and then freely forgave them.

Soon after this he paid the debt of nature at York, in the ſixty-ſixth year of his age, after having been emperor of the Roman people about eighteen years. In ſome caſes he acted conſiſtent with juſtice; but it often happened that his juſtice bordered upon cruelty, ſo that although ſome perſons have extolled his virtues, yet none of them were of ſuch a nature as to be of any benefit to the public.

A.D. 211. Severus, by his will, ordered that his two ſons, Caracalla and Geta, ſhould ſucceed him in the empire, but no action could be more imprudent, although it may be conſidered as conſiſtent with thoſe affections which parents naturally have for their children. Geta was

of

of a meek, mild diſpoſition; but Caracalla was fierce and cruel, ſo that it could not be ſuppoſed they would agree long together.

Caracalla, determined to be without a rival in power, reſolved to make away with his brother, and in conſequence of that reſolution, barbarouſly murdered him, giving out, as a vindication of ſo horrid an act, that he was forced to it from motives of ſelf-preſervation. By a profuſe diſtribution of his favours, he brought the ſoldiers, as well as the ſenators, over to his party, and by their united aſſiſtance he was declared ſole emperor of Rome, and began his reign with ſuch acts of cruelty as ſoon convinced the people that they had made an improper choice.

He ordered ſome of the moſt reputable of the Roman citizens to be put to death, among whom was Papinian, the famous lawyer, who refuſed to plead in defence of his conduct. Every officer appointed by his brother Geta was put to death, ſo that the people ſaw revived in this monſter all the crimes of Caligula, Nero, Domitian, and ſuch other wretches as had diſgraced the ſeat of regal dignity.

He took ſo much pleaſure in executions, even of the innocent, that at one time he ordered the ſoldiers to fall upon a body of the people in the theatre, for no other reaſon but that of their having diſcountenanced a charioteer, of whom he was extremely fond. He had no confidence in any but the ſoldiers, whom he was obliged to keep ſteady to his intereſt by great rewards extorted from the defenceleſs people. His next reſolution was, to viſit the more diſtant provinces of the empire, and accordingly he marched with his army through part of Germany into Macedonia, and then paſſed over to the Leſſer Aſia, to viſit the ruins of Troy. From

Aſia he continued his march to Egypt, where, becauſe ſome perſons had ridiculed his perſon as well as his vices, he ordered ſo many innocent people to be ſlain, that their blood ran in ſtreams into the Nile.

He viſited Parthia, deſiring Artabanus the king to give him his daughter, but that was no more than a feint to get him into his power. Artabanus, not ſuſpecting the leaſt injury, went to meet the emperor, attended by a great number of his ſubjects unarmed, and Caracalla, like an abandoned cruel monſter of guilt, ordered that the wild beaſts which he took along with him ſhould be let looſe upon them, by which many of them were killed, and the king himſelf narrowly eſcaped.

His heart, corrupted as it was, could ſcarce invent new crimes, for, upon his return to Rome, he propoſed marriage to the mother of Geta, his brother, for this woman was the ſecond wife of Severus. Whatever might be her ſentiments, or whether ſhe complied with his unnatural requeſt from motives of fear, is not certainly known; but the nuptials were celebrated in the moſt public manner, to the great ſcandal of Rome.

But his crimes brought fear along with them, for he was ſo conſcious of his being hated by the whole body of the people, that he ordered the aſtrologers to be conſulted concerning the manner and time of his death. Marternianus, one of his chief favourites, was employed in this buſineſs, and he, willing to ruin Macrinus, another of the officers of ſtate, cauſed a letter to be conveyed to the emperor, in the moſt private manner, intimating that Macrinus had a deſign againſt his life; but although the letter was delivered to the emperor, yet he never read it, but gave it to Macrinus, who was moſt terribly alarmed

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to find an accuſation of that nature preferred againſt him by an anonymous writer. Convinced that he had ſome powerful enemy near the perſon of the emperor, he reſolved to ſave himſelf by the deſtruction of the tyrant. For that purpoſe he made choice of one Martial, a centurion of the guards, whoſe brother had been put to death by the order of Caracalla. This Martial was a man of great perſonal ſtrength, he was often near the emperor's perſon, and his deſire of revenge was ſo ſtrong, that he did not regard what became of himſelf, ſo as he could ſee the tyrant murdered.

An opportunity was not wanting long; for one day, while the emperor had retired to a private place at one of his country-houſes, Martial followed him, and ſtabbed him dead on the ſpot. Martial attempted to ſave himſelf by flight, but he was overtaken by ſome of the German horſemen, who, without waiting to bring him to a trial, killed him, and then threw his body to the dogs.

Such was the end of Caracalla, a wretch of whom it may be ſaid, "That cruelty and the moſt abomi-"nable crimes were ſo much ſtudied and practiced "by him, that he even reduced wickedneſs to a "ſyſtem." His example diffuſed itſelf throughout all the empire, and the people ſunk into ſloth, while the ſoldiers encreaſed in power, and at laſt trampled on every right without the leaſt regard to juſtice.

Macrinus had acted in ſo private a manner in the affair of murdering the emperor, that no perſon ſuſpected him as concerned. A. D. 217. He was a man of ſome reputation for his courage, and therefore the ſoldiers elected him emperor, which was confirmed by the ſenate. This emperor was a native of one of the remote provinces in Afri-

ca, and had raiſed himſelf from the office of centurion to the higheſt ſtation in the army, and at laſt was advanced to the purple in an accidental manner.

In his time, Artabanes, king of Parthia, invaded ſome of the Roman provinces, in order to be revenged for the horrid act of cruelty in Caracalla, who deſtroyed ſo many of his nobles, by letting looſe among them the wild beaſts. Macrinus went to oppoſe him, but finding the Parthians extremely numerous, he rather choſe to make peace, than run the danger of ſupporting an expenſive war. He was very rigid in his military diſcipline, for he made ſeveral attempts to reform the army, but this, with ſome other circumſtances, haſtened his end.

Caracalla had left a natural ſon named Heliogabolus, or prieſt of the ſun. He was not above fourteen years of age, but extremely handſome, and greatly beloved by the people of Emeſſa in Phœnicia, where he then reſided with Moſa, his grandmother, an ambitious woman, and poſſeſſed of great riches. She was not ignorant that Macrinus was hated by the ſoldiers, and by the moſt inſinuating means ſhe could invent, Heliogabolus was introduced to the ſoldiers, who proclaimed him emperor.

Julian was ſent againſt Heliogabolus by Macrinus, who was then at Antioch, but his whole army mutinied, and cut their leader in pieces. Macrinus finding himſelf in ſuch a critical ſituation, marched againſt the legions who had revolted, and both armies met together near the borders of Syria, where the emperor was defeated, and with much difficulty ſaved his life by flight. He diſguiſed himſelf, and travelled to Chalcedon, where he and his ſon Diadumenus were both diſcovered and put to death by the ſoldiers.

Macrinus

Macrinus could not have expected a much better fate than he met with, for he knew that no emperor could be ſafe, unleſs he made himſelf ſure of the army.

The election of a boy to govern the Roman empire was one of the greateſt inſults that could have been offered to the people, but then it muſt be obſerved, that a minor is always the moſt agreeable ſovereign to venal favourites, and an army ruined by licentiouſneſs. A. D. 218.

The young emperor was indulged in every vice, and the repreſentations which his courtiers have given us of his actions point him out as one of the moſt horrid monſters that ever exiſted in the world. Like Caligula, he ordered that the people ſhould worſhip him as a god, and was ſo ridiculous as to pretend that he was married to the moon. His palace was the receptacle for the moſt odious proſtitutes in Rome, and he even built a ſenate for them to aſſemble in. Indeed, he is repreſented as committing ſuch horrid crimes, that it is not conſiſtent with decency to mention them.

But theſe ridiculous follies, by which he degraded the nature of man, were even exceeded by many acts of the moſt horrid cruelty. Sometimes he would order the wild beaſts to be let looſe upon ſuch as came to viſit him, and while they were devouring them, he laughed with as much ſeeming pleaſure as if he had been ſeeing a public entertainment in the theatre.

At other times, as if the lives of men had been of leſs value than the meaneſt reptile, he would often order his gueſts to be ſmothered, or put to death in whatever manner his cruelty could invent. That nothing might be wanting to complete the catalogue of his crimes, he pretended to foretel future events,

by inſpecting the entrails of human creatures, and, for that purpoſe, ſacrificed ſome of the moſt handſome youths that could be found, either in the city or in the provinces. His horrid cruelties became ſo conſpicuous, that the prætorian bands mutinied, being encouraged thereto by his grandmother Moſa, who had raiſed him, by her intrigues, to the purple, and Alexander, a young prince, related to Heliogabolus, was made co-adjutor with him in the empire.

The tyrant, conſcious of his crimes, and well-knowing that he muſt one time or other ſuffer a violent death, began to make preparations for it in the moſt whimſical manner. He alſo attempted to poiſon Alexander, and actually gave out that he was dead, which ſo much enraged the ſoldiers, that, in order to appeaſe them, he took the young prince in his chariot to the camp.

He was now in the power of the army, and altho' he attempted to make his eſcape, and for ſome time concealed himſelf in his palace, yet they found him, and having diſpatched him, large ſtones were tied to his body, and the whole ſunk in the Tiber. Such was the end of Heliogabolus, in the eighteenth year of his age, after an odious reign of four years. His mother, relations, and favourites all ſhared the ſame fate, with this difference, that the moſt obnoxious were put to more ſevere torments than the others.

A D. 222. The latter period of the Roman Hiſtory is the moſt inſignificant of the whole. We are more deſtitute of materials to the enumeration of general or particular facts, than in the age of Scipio and Hannibal. This muſt be aſcribed to the decay of learning, when few perſons made hiſtory their ſtudy, nor indeed any other ſcience.

Alexander

Alexander was only ſixteen years of age at the time he was proclaimed emperor, but according to all the accounts that we can find of him, he was one of the moſt accompliſhed youths that had ever been raiſed to the moſt dignified ſtation.

His mother Mammæa, a woman adorned with every virtue, adviſed him to preſerve the love of his ſubjects, by aboliſhing ſuch inſtitutions of an iniquitous nature as had been eſtabliſhed during the reign of his predeceſſor. Sabinus, a learned ſenator, and Ulpian, the famous lawyer, were perſons in whom he repoſed the greateſt confidence, and by their advice he would not ſuffer any place to be ſold, for thoſe who purchaſe places muſt ſell juſtice. Such of the magiſtrates as were found guilty of taking bribes, he ordered to be puniſhed in the moſt exemplary manner, nor could any thing leſs than the moſt unſullied virtue and integrity recommend a perſon to his notice as an object of his favour. Every diſtinguiſhing honour was conferred on ſuch as diſcharged their duty with fidelity, and he would often put them in mind that he was indebted to them.

He ordered that the Chriſtians ſhould be allowed to meet in public to worſhip God, according to the dictates of their conſcience, and ſuch cruel edicts as had been iſſued againſt them by former emperors were cancelled. Nor was he leſs attentive to the army, for many of the barbarians having made incurſions into the frontier provinces, he put the legions under proper diſcipline, and took care that their wages ſhould be paid them in a regular manner. A lover of virtue, and conſcious of having practiſed it, he reſolved to take the field, for ſuch was the ſtate of the empire, that he found it neceſſary to march againſt his numerous enemies in per-

ſon. He defeated the Perſians, and retook the cities of Babylon and Cteſiphon, obliging the inhabitants once more to acknowledge the Romans their ſuperiors.

Nor were his arms leſs ſucceſsful in other parts of the empire, for Varius Macrinus defeated ſuch of the Germans as had revolted; Junius Palmatus reduced the Armenians, and Furius Celſus returned from Africa, crowned with laurels.

While the emperor was at Antioch, his mother Mammæa ſent to Alexandria for the famous Chriſtian divine, Origen, to converſe with him on the principles of religion, and having heard him with the greateſt attention ſeveral days ſucceſſively, ſhe was ſo much taken with his engaging manner, and the truth of what he advanced, that ſhe ſent him home under a ſafe guard to his native city.

## LETTER LII.

BUT notwithſtanding the many virtues of this emperor, yet Rome was haſtening to decay. Luxury had deſtroyed the ſmall remains of patriotiſm in the capitol, and the barbarians were become ſo expert in the art of war, that they made annual incurſions into the frontier provinces, carrying fire and ſword wherever they came. The Germans came in ſuch numbers into Italy, that the emperor was obliged to march againſt them in perſon, for, like Marcus Aurelius, he never thought any hardſhip too great, where the liberties of the people were in danger.

His ſucceſs was equal to his courage, but ſome of the legions who had been corrupted by the example of

of Heliogabolus refuſed to ſubmit to the ſtrict diſcipline enforced by the emperor, and being ſpirited up by Maximin, an old experienced general, Alexander and his mother were both put to death in their tents.

He was one of the beſt men that had been raiſed to the purple ſince the death of Titus, for he had all his virtues, without any of his vices. He was only in his twenty-ninth year, and his reign had been one continued act of prudence, virtue, and moderation. A man of his ſpirit might, in ſome other age, have reſtored virtue to the commonwealth, but the ſoldiers were become too licentious, and the inteſtine wealth of the ſtate had been exhauſted in defending the frontier provinces.

Maximin, who had been the chief inſtru- A. D.
ment in putting Alexander to death, was 235.
immediately proclaimed emperor by the ſoldiers, who raiſed to that dignity every one whom they imagined would rule moſt conſiſtent with their own inclinations, and grant them an unlimited power to domineer over the people.

This Maximin was one of the moſt extraordinary perſons of whom we have an account in hiſtory. He was originally the ſon of a poor peaſant in Thrace, and for ſome years followed the employment of a ſhepherd. He was in ſtature above eight feet high, with a body proportionable thereto in ſtrength. In feats of activity, he was the moſt remarkable in that age, and the emperor Severus having taken notice of him, admitted him as a ſoldier in his guards. Caracalla advanced him to the degree of a centurion, and, ſome time after, being made a tribune, he ſpent the greateſt part of his time in reforming ſuch abuſes as had crept into the army. He refuſed to ſerve under Macrinus, becauſe

he had murdered his maſter, and, in the reign of Heliogabolus, diſdaining the wretched effeminate life of that emperor, he retired to his native country and ſpent ſome years in cultivating a farm, rather than ſerve under ſuch a wretch, who, in the whole of his conduct, was a ſcandal and a diſgrace to human nature.

Alexander made him commander of the fourteenth legion, and, by his care and aſſiduity, the ſoldiers were brought under the ſtricteſt diſcipline. He marched with them againſt the Germans, and obtained ſo many victories, that he was looked upon as one of the braveſt and moſt experienced generals that had ever commanded under the Roman emperors. Great hopes were formed by the people of the happineſs they would enjoy under this emperor, but their diſappointment was equally great; for, according to all the accounts tranſmitted to us concerning him, he was one of the moſt execrable tyrants that ever exiſted. He was qualified by nature, and a low, vulgar education, to make a diſtinguiſhing figure in an inferior ſtation, but no ſooner was he advanced to power, than he conſidered himſelf as uncontroulable, and reſolved that the terror of his name ſhould command the obedience of the people, even in the moſt diſtant provinces.

The ſenate refuſed to confirm his election, upon which he ordered ſuch as were moſt obnoxious to be put to death, and, regardleſs of weak forms, made himſelf emperor, well knowing that where power is wanting, law is weak. He was the firſt of the Roman emperors who had claimed this power, but then he was not ignorant that the power of the ſenate was no more than an empty name.

The

The Chriſtians were perſecuted in the ſevereſt manner throughout every province in the empire, for no other reaſon but that they had been protected by Alexander; but this only ſerved to carry the goſpel into many remote nations where it was before unknown. He ſeized on the eſtates of the richeſt patricians, and becauſe he could not bear that any perſon ſhould ridicule the meanneſs of his birth, he ordered all thoſe to be put to death who had known him while in a humble ſtation. Theſe cruelties would have made him odious to all ranks of people, had he not taken care of the provinces by the utmoſt exertion of military ſkill. He encreaſed the pay of the ſoldiers, and in order to chaſtiſe the Germans who had taken up arms, he marched againſt them, and deſtroyed their cities with fire and ſword. He fought in every engagement at the head of his legions, being determined that his preſence ſhould animate the ſoldiers, who could not without the juſt imputation of cowardice, refuſe to imitate the example of their leader. But the glare of his conqueſts could neither procure him the love of the people, nor the fidelity of the army. His cruelties had diſquieted the Roman people in general, and ſeveral conſpiracies were formed againſt him, particularly by the ſoldiers, who proclaimed one Quarcianus to be emperor, becauſe Maximin had diſmiſſed him from all his employments.

Quarcianus, ſo far as we are able to judge from a variety of circumſtances, was forced by the ſoldiers to accept of this new honour, but within a few days after he was declared emperor, the perſon who had been moſt active in ſupporting him ſtabbed him in bed, and carried his head to Maximin, who, after teſtifying his gratitude, ordered the aſſaſſin to be put to death.

Much

Much about this time the provinces in Africa, who had been ſubjected to the moſt exceſſive taxations, revolted, and put to death ſeveral of the Roman officers. Senſible that the tyrant Maximin would wreak his vengeance upon them, they reſolved to make choice of a head, and therefore Gordian, their proconſul, was elected emperor.

Gordian was then far advanced in years, and therefore he ſaid all he could to diſſuade the ſoldiers from their purpoſe, but in vain, for they conſtrained him to accept of the dangerous honour, in conſort with his ſon Gordian, whom they appointed to be his coadjutor. This imprudent ſtep occaſioned an univerſal ſcene of riot, murder and bloodſhed throughout the whole empire, for parties were formed in every province, according to their different inclinations, and many perſons were murdered in the moſt cruel manner, without regard to the laws or the moſt ſacred rights of ſociety, which obliges ſubjects to protect each other.

Maximin no ſooner heard the news of what was carrying on againſt him, than he raged like a madman, but being deſirous to keep the ſoldiers attached to his perſon, he promiſed them the greateſt rewards, and began his march to Rome, in order to quell ſuch inſurrections as had happened in that city. The ſoldiers promiſed obedience, but they were compoſed of ſo many different nations, and ſo loaded with baggage and incommoded with ſlaves, that they rather reſembled the army of Darius than thoſe brave veterans who had fought under the antient Roman conquerors. Capelianus, who commanded in Africa, obtained ſeveral advantages over the inſurgents, and murdered moſt of the citizens of Carthage, loading his ſoldiers with plunder, and telling them that it was his duty to do ſo, in order to revenge

revenge the inſults that had been offered to Maximin.

In the mean time, notwithſtanding a variety of difficulties that he had to encounter, Maximin marched to Rome, filled with rage, and wiſhing for new opportunities of wreaking his vengeance upon thoſe whom he conſidered as his enemies. The ſenate knew that they had no reaſon to expect any mercy, and therefore meeting together in the temple of Jupiter, they made choice of Balbinus and Pupienus to be emperors, who raiſed what forces they could, in order to oppoſe the tyrant, and theſe marched againſt him under the command of Pupienus.

Scarce had Pupienus marched from Rome, when two ſoldiers attached to Maximin raiſed a ſedition in the city, and having gathered together a great rabble of people, many of the innocent inhabitants were murdered in cool blood, ſo that every ſtreet was covered with dead bodies.

Maximin continued his march with the utmoſt expedition, but the ſenate, who had reſolved to ſtand by their new election of emperors, ſent orders to all the forces in the northern parts of Italy, to do every thing poſſible to harraſs his army, by preventing them from getting proviſions. The city of Aquilea, which had hitherto continued firm to his intereſt, refuſed him admittance, upon which he reſolved to take it by ſtorm; but the beſieged made ſuch a vigorous defence, that he reſolved to block it up, by preventing the country people from bringing in proviſions.

Maximin, who could ſet no bounds to his paſſions, ordered ſeveral of his commanders to be put to death; but the ſoldiers, ever impatient of reſtraint, formed a ſtrong conſpiracy againſt him, which they put

put in practice, by murdering both him and his ſon in their tents.

Such was the end of Maximin, a man formed to make a conſiderable figure in an humble ſtation, but not fit to command an empire. Brutal in his manners, and totally unacquainted with government, he became a moſt cruel tyrant as ſoon as he was advanced to the purple, and has by his actions cauſed his name to be tranſmitted to poſterity with infamy.

A. D. 236. It would be happy for the people in general if the murder of a mercileſs tyrant prevented the repetition of his crimes; but it has not been able to effectuate ſo valuable a purpoſe.

Pupienus and Balbinus, the two new emperors, were both men of age and experience, but they were not deſtitute of human paſſions. Diſputes aroſe between them upon the pretence of ſuperiority, which was equally claimed by both, while the prætorian bands reſolved to make a new election.

Indeed, they did not think of a proper perſon to be made choice of as emperor till they had firſt diſpatched thoſe who had been raiſed to the purple by the ſenate. They marched in the moſt tumultuous manner to the apartments of Pupienus, and he finding himſelf in danger, ſent to Balbinus, his colleague, for aſſiſtance, but he refuſed to comply with his requeſt, having ſome hopes that the ſoldiers would make him ſole emperor. In that, however, he found himſelf miſtaken, for both the emperors were dragged from their lurking places, and put to death in the moſt ignominious manner. Their dead bodies were expoſed in the ſtreets in the moſt ſcandalous and inhuman manner, while the ſoldiers, who were

now

now the ſole lords of the empire, returned to the camp in triumph.

We have already ſeen an inſtance of the Roman empire being put up to ſale, and ſuch was the degeneracy of the times, that even a purchaſer was found; but that was trifling when compared to ſome of the ſubſequent acts of licentiouſneſs committed by the ſoldiers, who had bidden defiance to every moral obligation; who had made tyrants and unmade laws. A. D. 238.

Triumphing over the late objects of their reſentment, they went in a tumultuous body into the city, and meeting by accident with Gordian, the ſon of that Gordian who had been formerly declared emperor by the people in Africa, they proclaimed him emperor, and obliged the poor, mean, puſillanimous ſenate to confirm the election.

As Gordian was not above ſixteen years of age, ſo they doubted not but they would have an opportu ity of ruling both him and the empire. But the virtues of this young prince ſeemed to threaten the diſſolution of that arrogant, unnatural ſyſtem of power, firſt invented by ambitious heroes, and kept up in oppoſition to the laws by the arbitrary will of the army.

His mind was cultivated by the ſeeds of knowledge, far ſuperior to his years, for he attended to the inſtructions of his tutors with the utmoſt care, and made a fine collection of books for his own uſe.

Miſithæas, who had the principal ſhare in the direction of his ſtudies, was a man of univerſal knowledge, and the moſt unblemiſhed morals. His integrity was unimpeached, and he directed his pupil in what manner to conduct the affairs of government

government ſo as to procure honour to himſelf and happineſs to the public. But all the hopes the people had formed with reſpect to happineſs under his reign vaniſhed, in conſequence of the continual incurſions that were made by the barbarians. The Scythians and Perſians revolted at the ſame time, while the Goths poured in upon the Roman provinces, like a deluge ſweeping all before them.

Gordian, with his tutor Miſithæas, whoſe daughter he had married, marched againſt the Perſians, and defeated them in a pitched engagement, but the brave and wiſe Miſithæas died ſoon after, not without ſuſpicion of his having been poiſoned by means of one Philip, an Arabian, who ſoon after got himſelf proclaimed emperor, and Gordian was put to death, in the twenty-ſecond year of his age.

A. D. 243. The election of Philip to the empire by the ſoldiers, was in the uſual manner confirmed by the ſenate, who were obliged to comply with every thing propoſed to them. The father of this Philip had been captain of a band of Arabians, who robbed and plundered all thoſe who came in their way, and no ſooner was he advanced to the purple than he appointed with himſelf in the empire his ſon, a boy not above ſix years of age.

Having ſettled the affairs of the Eaſt in a very partial and ſuperficial manner, without any regard to the intereſts of the republic, he ſet out for Rome, and it being then exactly one thouſand years ſince the building of the city, he ordered the ſecular games to be exhibited with the utmoſt magnificence. Some of the inhabitants have aſſerted, that he was converted to Chriſtianity, but this ſeems

ſeems altogether impoſſible, for it cannot be ſuppoſed that the diſciples or followers of Chriſt would have admitted one as a member among them, whoſe life was ſtained with the blackeſt crimes. The hiſtory of theſe ages is ſo much impaired by the iniquity of time, and the want of good authors, that we are often led to reſt on probable conjecture, inſtead of real traces of facts.

This, however, is certain, that Macrinus who commanded under Philip, being ſent againſt the Goths, who had taken up arms, he revolted from his duty, and perſuaded the ſoldiers to proclaim him emperor. But he did not long enjoy his new honour, for the ſoldiers, ever precipitate in their choice, and averſe to ſubjection, dethroned the pageant whom they had ſet up, and then put him to death. Philip having received news of this inſurrection, and the death of Macrinus, ſent Decius, one of his chief lieutenants to command the army in his ſtead; but no ſooner had he joined the legions, than the ſoldiers, who had the higheſt notions of his military courage, inſiſted that he ſhould aſſume the purple.

Decius, who appears to have been a perfect maſter of diſſimulation, complied with the requeſts of the ſoldiers, but at the ſame time, ſent word to Philip, that ſelf preſervation had obliged him to take ſuch a ſtep. This was undoubtedly a very ſpecious pretence, and ſuch as might have done very well with one leſs acquainted with human nature than Philip, but that emperor, conſcious of his critical ſituation, ſet out to meet Decius, whom he came up with near Verona, where one of his own ſoldiers ſtruck off his head. He was a cruel inhuman tyrant, and his death gave the utmoſt ſatisfaction to the Roman people in general.

Decius

A. D. 248. Decius was declared emperor in the midſt of inteſtine diviſions, and it was imagined by ſome, that his conduct would have reconciled all the contending parties, and reſtored diſcipline in the army, ſo as to bring the ſoldiers under proper ſubjection. It is even ſaid of this emperor, that he was ſo earneſt to preſerve the eſteem and good-will of the people, that he gave them leave to chuſe a cenſor, who was on every occaſion to take notice of his public conduct. But the greateſt virtues even exerted in the moſt ſteady manner, are often loſt when contentions ariſe in the commonwealth.

The Chriſtians were now become very numerous in the Roman empire, and in conſequence thereof, the reſpect that uſed to be paid to the old religion of the heathens, gradually wore off. This induced Decius to iſſue a ſevere edict againſt the Chriſtians, which, although he knew it to be in its own nature inconſiſtent with ſound policy, yet he was obliged to give way to it, and many thouſands of thoſe innocent people were put to death in the moſt cruel manner. In vain were the moſt cruel tortures uſed to make thoſe people deny their Divine Redeemer, for in conſequence of the perſecution, their numbers daily increaſed, and to uſe the words of the Apoſtle, "they became more than conquerors, through "him that loved them." But the oppoſition between them and the heathens was ſuch, that the emperor, unacquainted with religion in general, was obliged to give way to the moſt powerful party.

The perſecution carried on by the heathens againſt the Chriſtians, waſted the interior power of the empire, and the Goths taking advantage thereof ſpread devaſtation through all the frontier provinces.

provinces. Courage, the diſtinguiſhing part of this emperor's character, induced him to take the field, and he obtained a ſignal victory over his enemies; but Gallus, who commanded under him, and who aſpired at the purple, led him into a defile, where he was defeated, and ſeeing his ſon killed on the ſpot, he clapped ſpurs to his horſe, but was ſwallowed up in a quagmire after his whole army was routed.

In ſome inſtances he has been conſidered as a moſt excellent prince; and, although he perſecuted the Chriſtians, yet that part of his conduct ſeemed rather to flow from political notions, than as the genuine dictates of his heart. This, however, ſhould teach ſovereigns while entruſted with power, not to iſſue orders of a coercive nature, till they have properly enquired whether the ſafety of the ſtate required them.

Decius being thus no more, Gallus was declared emperor by the ſoldiers, and the ſenate, in conformity with their former conduct, confirmed the election. Having made peace with the Goths on the moſt diſhonourable terms, he returned to Rome, with no other view, as it would ſeem, than to give an indulgence to his pleaſures, and by plunging himſelf in all manner of ſenſuality, become an object of ridicule to every ſober man in the empire, who wiſhed well to the intereſts of the commonwealth. A. D. 251.

But although he was received at Rome in the uſual manner, amidſt the acclamations of the people, yet his happineſs was of ſhort duration. The barbarians, who by bribes had been for ſome time induced from making incurſions into the provinces, reſolved to take the advantage of the emperor's neglect, and in conſequence of that reſolution, Rome itſelf

itſelf was threatened with immediate deſtruction. A famine raged at this time throughout all the provinces of the Roman empire, and Gallus, who had given himſelf up to ſloth and ſenſuality, ſuffered the obſolete edicts againſt the Chriſtians, to be put in force with the utmoſt rigour. This, with ſome other unpopular parts of his conduct, brought on his ruin, for finding himſelf under the neceſſity of oppoſing Æmilius, one of his generals, who had taken up arms againſt him, they came to a general engagement in Meſia, where Gallus was killed, to the great joy of the Roman people, who had long groaned under the oppreſſions they had ſuffered in conſequence of his adminiſtration. He was a faithleſs friend, a cruel maſter, and an imperious ſovereign, and his name muſt be conſidered as one of thoſe blots that ſtain the Roman annals.

A. D. 253. However nauſeous it is to be continually repeating crimes, yet hiſtorical exactneſs requires it, and I am now under the neceſſity of telling you, that although Æmilius had got himſelf declared emperor, yet the ſoldiers were not content with the election, and, therefore, having killed him, Valerian was made choice of to ſucceed to the purple.

Valerian was one of thoſe who in an advanced age of life, endeavours to bring about a reformation, but the diſputes between the Pagans and the Chriſtians were carried on with ſo much heat, that he was obliged to comply with thoſe in power, and, in conſequence thereof, all thoſe who adhered to the religion of Jeſus, were tortured in ſuch a manner as is ſhocking to human nature.

This impolitic conduct of the emperor was attended with a train of other evils, for inteſtine diviſions

ſions are ſure to lead to foreign wars. The barbarians, who had now acquired the art of war, in conſequence of oppoſing the Romans, were become ſo formidable to their haughty antagoniſts, that they paid no regard to the limits of the empire, but burſt in upon every province with the moſt undaunted fury.

In every place uſurpers ſet up for themſelves, while the Perſians, ever impatient of reſtraint, made a moſt diſtinguiſhing figure under their king Sapor, who invaded Syria, and carried deſtruction along with him. In one of theſe engagements the emperor Valerian was taken priſoner, and having been treated in the moſt inhuman manner, his eyes were put out, and then he was flead alive as the laſt act of ſavage cruelty.

With reſpect to his character, it is of a problematical nature for virtues and vices were ſo blended together, that we cannot tell which of them were the moſt predominant, only that the empire between the two fell a ſacrifice to the iniquities of the times.

## LETTER LIII.

A. D. 259. GALIENUS, the ſon of Valerian, was elected emperor in the room of his father, but he being quite addicted to luxury, no great benefits were to be expected from what he did in the adminiſtration of public affairs. This indolent conduct of the emperor was the more to be wondered at, as the northern nations, as well as thoſe in the eaſt, were daily pouring in in vaſt numbers. In vain did the people in the provinces ſolicit for protection againſt the barbarians;

barbarians; there was no army to oppoſe them, nor money in the treaſury to defray the neceſſary expences. Weak and inactive, Galienus ever lent a deaf ear to the intreaties of his people, while many of the governors of the provinces declared themſelves abſolute ſovereigns, independant of Rome. Thirty petty tyrants declared for themſelves at once, and nothing but ſlaughter, peſtilence, and every other calamity was to be met with in the provinces.

Indeed the interior ſtate of the empire was corrupted, and the baleful influence diffuſed itſelf to the moſt remote parts. Power in one place created a tyrant, and the ſame power in another threw him down. The names of theſe tyrants are not worth being recorded, nor has hiſtory tranſmitted their actions to poſterity; they roſe by murder, and ſome were cloathed with the purple where they died violent deaths.

The Roman empire, like the ruins of a ſtately palace, was now beginning to fall in pieces; it was like a city half reduced to aſhes, or a country depopulated of its inhabitants. The barbarians having approached as far as Milan, Galienus found himſelf under the neceſſity of going in perſon to oppoſe them, but there he was killed by his own ſoldiers, who hated to ſerve under ſo voluptuous and puſillanimous a commander.

A. D. 268. Flavius Claudius, a man of great abilities, was elected by the army, and the ſenate, to the great ſatisfaction of the people in general, who ardently wiſhed to be under the government of a prince who could unite moderation with valour. Hiſtorians are not agreed concerning his origin, nor is it of great ſervice to know, for although ſuperior merit may reflect luſtre

luſtre on the moſt dignified families, yet it can receive none from them. His vaſt abilities enabled him to oppoſe the numerous barbarians, and altho' he was not able to reſtore the grandeur of the empire, yet for ſome time he procured the people a temporary reſpite.

The Goths had over-run all Greece, where they not only murdered the innocent inhabitants, but deſtroyed the noble buildings, and reduced the libraries to aſhes. Three hundred thouſand barbarians ſailed down the Danube in ſearch of new conqueſts, and the Roman empire ſeemed like an helpleſs orphan, left with an affluent fortune, but devoured by mercileſs claimants.

Claudius, notwithſtanding the formidable oppoſition making againſt him, yet nothing could intimidate him; nay, like all great men, the more numerous the difficulties, the more active he was in making the neceſſary preparations. At Milan, he defeated Aureolus, one of the tyrants, and from thence marching with what forces he could raiſe, he defeated a numerous army of the Goths, making priſoners of ſuch as eſcaped the ſword, and ſelling them as ſlaves to the people. The ſame proſperous effects attended his army in every part of the empire, ſo that for ſome time the barbarians were obliged to remain quiet in their inhoſpitable deſarts. The Germans, who had revolted, were likewiſe ſubdued by the emperor, but in his laſt expedition, which was againſt Tetricus and Zenobia, he was ſeized with a violent fever, which put an end to his life, after a reign of near two years, in which he had done more real ſervice to his ſubjects, than ſome tyrants do in a century.

When we conſider the time in which he lived, and the depravity of manners that took place, we are

are naturally led to compare him to a bright ſtar, breaking out in the obſcurity of the night. All the virtues of the greateſt emperors were centered in him, and happy for Rome had he lived longer.

A. D. 270. The accompliſhed Claudius being now no more, a tumult aroſe among the ſoldiers, concerning the perſon whom they were to make choice of as his ſucceſſor. Quintilian, the brother of the deceaſed emperor, thought to raiſe himſelf to the purple, but finding himſelf obnoxious to the ſoldiers, he ordered his veins to be opened, and bled to death.

Aurelian, a native of Dacia, who had by merit alone raiſed himſelf to be maſter of the horſe, was made choice of by the ſoldiers, and his title confirmed by the ſenate. He was one of the moſt extraordinary perſons in that age, with reſpect to perſonal courage, and that made him the more proper for governing the empire at a time when it was infeſted by the barbarians on every ſide.

Some of the tribunes among the antient Germans having taken up arms, this active emperor marched againſt them in perſon, and defeated them with great ſlaughter.

Zenobia, a queen of the moſt maſculine diſpoſition, and better acquainted with the military art than many of the warriors of that age, had eſtabliſhed an empire in the Eaſt, diſclaiming all connection with the Romans, any farther than as an enemy. Aurelius, in his wars againſt this Amazon queen, met with many difficulties, and he gave ſuch proofs of his moderation as could not fail of endearing him to all ranks of people without exception.

To ſtimulate his ſoldiers to conqueſt, he often made raſh oaths, that if he was victorious he would not leave one of the inhabitants alive, but in order

to

to indulge his natural love of mercy, when any place ſurrendered, he was ſure to tell the ſoldiers that he had been warned by an apparition not to execute the intended maſſacre.

Zenobia, with an army as well diſciplined as any that Aſia ever had produced, met Aurelian near Emeſſa in Syria. The courage of the ſoldiers, who compoſed the army of Zenobia, was greater than that of the Romans, but then it was like a flame that is ſoon extinguiſhed. The Roman diſcipline, and an unſhaken perſeverance, enabled the legions to decide the fate of the day, and Zenobia, hitherto victorious, was obliged to take refuge in the famous city of Palmyra. She expected to have received ſuccours from ſome of the neighbouring nations, but theſe being intercepted by Aurelian, ſhe made her eſcape from Palmyra, diſguiſed in the habit of a ſhepherdeſs. Parties, however, were ſent after her, and ſhe was brought back to the emperor Aurelian, who reſerved her to be an honour to him in his triumphal entry to Rome. At the ſame time, the city of Palmyra ſubmitted, and Longinus, the greateſt philoſopher, and the moſt eloquent orator of that age, was put to death for no other reaſon but that he had been the ſecretary and counſellor of queen Zenobia.

The depravity of the times induced this emperor to exerciſe more ſeverity towards thoſe who offended than is perhaps conſiſtent with humanity, but there was an abſolute neceſſity, conſiſtent with the doctrine of retaliation, that thoſe who are guilty of cruelty without remorſe, ſhould be puniſhed without mercy.

The innocent Chriſtians were accuſed by their enemies of being diſaffected to the emperor, and

ſeveral edicts were iſſued againſt them, but few of them were ever put in execution. The ſeverities of this emperor were carried to the higheſt extremity, but at laſt they haſtened on his deſtruction. Inadvertently, he threatened to put Meneſthus, his ſecretary, to death, and as that officer, from ſome parts of his own conduct and a perfect acquaintance with the diſpoſition of the emperor, had no reaſon to expect any mercy, he reſolved to preſerve his own life at the expence of his maſter's. Accordingly, he made out a liſt of the principal men in the army, whom he pretended were to be put to death, and having ſhewn it to them, they unanimouſly joining in a conſpiracy, murdered the emperor near Byzantium, in the ſixty-third year of his age, and the fifth of his reign. He was a man of great activity, undaunted courage, ſteady perſeverance, and might have acquired immortal honour, had he lived in virtuous times when ſuch ſeverities as he practiſed were not neceſſary.

A. D. 275. The conduct of the ſoldiers in diſpoſing of the empire in whatever manner they pleaſed, had brought the ſovereign authority into ſo much contempt, that few who had the leaſt regard to their own ſafety, would conſent to accept of it. The ſenate were afraid of the army, and the lieutenants who commanded the legions, could not agree among themſelves. Each party pretended their want of abilities in making a proper choice, for this plain reaſon, that let the conduct of the emperor be ever ſo inconſiſtent with the nature of his duty, the fault would in the end be imputed to thoſe who had choſen him. The ſenate, at laſt, after much altercation between them and the army, made choice of Tacitus, a man of great reputation, and

and much eſteemed by the people in general. He was then ſeventy-five years old, and no way ambitious of the honour which the ſenate had conferred on him.

His reign began with ſome acts of political juſtice which in their own nature ſeemed to border on cruelty. Meneſthus, who had been principally concerned in the murder of the late emperor, was impaled alive, his body was then thrown to the dogs, and his eſtate forfeited for the uſe of the public.

This emperor, who was elected at an age when others even reſign all connections with temporal things, had good natural parts, and was a lover of univerſal learning, and did every thing in his power to reward learned men.

But it could not be expected that a man ſo far advanced in years could live long, and he died within ſix months after his election, he ſunk under the decay of nature, while he was marching to oppoſe the Scythians, and ſome of the eaſtern nations, who had broke into the frontier provinces of the empire.

In that degenerate age, when offices were given away in conſequence of the corrupt notions and ungovernable paſſions of the ſoldiers, it was not an eaſy matter to bring about an election without tumult. Some of the ſoldiers on the death of Tacitus, propoſed that his brother Florian ſhould be emperor; but the majority being againſt him, he laid violent hands on himſelf. Probus, a native of Pannonia, was made choice of by the army, and as he had been brought up in the camp from his youth, great hopes were formed of his ſuperior abilities. He was no ſooner A. D. 275.

inveſted with the purple, than he marched againſt the Germans, whom he defeated, and from thence into Dalmatia againſt the Sarmatians, who threatened to carry the flames of civil war into the center of Italy. Undaunted with the number of difficulties that oppoſed him, he forced the Goths to ſubmit to ſuch terms as he thought proper to preſcribe. Many of the rebellious nations in Aſia ſubmitted to him at the ſame time, but upon his return to Rome, he divided ſome of the frontier provinces among the barbarians, which was the moſt impolitic ſtep he could have taken, becauſe it gave them better opportunities of continuing their common invaſions.

The confuſion of the times encouraged many pretenders to ſet up for themſelves in different parts of the empire, but they were wretches of ſuch deſpicable characters, that they fell a ſacrifice to their vices almoſt as ſoon as they made their appearance. However, the Goths, Huns, and Vandals, were now become too formidable for the Roman legions; and although many of their armies were defeated by the vigilance and courage of the emperor, yet they roſe ſuperior to every oppoſition.

At laſt this excellent emperor, after a reign of little more than ſix years, was murdered by the ſoldiers upon his return from an expedition againſt the Perſians, for no other reaſon but that of having attempted to reſtore diſcipline among them.

A. D. 282. The further we proceed in the Roman Hiſtory, after the death of Trajan, it becomes more and more intricate, nor are we able on many occaſions, to produce materials ſo as to conduct us through a labyrinth of confuſion, diſtreſs, and crimes.

As

As ſoon as Probus was dead, the army, in their uſual manner, elected Carus, præfect, to ſucceed him, who, in order to make himſelf as popular as he could, admitted his two ſons, Numerian and Carinus, to ſhare with him in the government. Numerian was a youth endowed with many virtues that might have done honour to a throne, but his brother was a ſlave to ſuch vices as were a diſgrace to human nature.

Carinus was no ſooner inveſted with the regal authority, than he found himſelf under the neceſſity of taking the field, for the Perſians, as well as ſome other nations, had made incurſions into the frontier provinces, and deſtroyed the places wherever they came. Carinus was a man of undaunted courage, and of ſuch perſeverance that no difficulties ſeemed too great for him to encounter. Accordingly he marched againſt the Perſians, and laid their cities and towns under contributions; but a dreadful ſtorm of lightning ariſing, he was, with many other perſons in the camp, ſtruck dead. This happened before the emperor had an opportunity of making a proper uſe of the victories he had obtained, or eſtabliſhing his power on a ſolid footing.

Numerian, who was then in the Camp, had the good fortune to eſcape, but he was ſo much affected with the death of his father, that it threw him into a moſt violent diſorder, ſo that he was almoſt deprived of the uſe of his reaſon. He was carried about in a litter, and Aſper, his father-in-law, having formed a ſcheme to make himſelf emperor, employed an aſſaſſin to murder him.

Aſper took care to conceal the death of Numerian, ſo that he was carried about in the litter ſome days

after his death, under pretence that his eyes were too weak to bear the light.

At laſt the ſmell became ſo offenſive, that a diſcovery was made, and the ſoldiers were ſo much enraged, that they threatened to murder every one whom they ſuſpected as guilty of ſo horrid a crime. But as a body muſt have a head, ſo the ſoldiers made choice of Diocleſian to be emperor, who was no ſooner inveſted with the purple than he put Aſper to death with his own hands. Carinus, the other ſon of Carus, hearing of his brother's death, marched againſt Diocleſian, but being odious to the ſoldiers, he was ſlain by one of his own tribunes, without coming to an engagement.

A. D. 285. Diocleſian, at the time of his election, was about forty years of age, and being of mean extraction, he had raiſed himſelf to the higheſt offices by his merit, without any aſſiſtance from thoſe in power, a circumſtance that redounds much to his honour. He was much eſteemed by the army in general, and the people began to form great hopes of living happy under his government. He ſeemed to conſider clemency as neceſſary to ſecure the affections of the people, and therefore he granted a free pardon to all thoſe who had taken up arms againſt him under Carinus. The barbarians, who had ſo long infeſted the Roman provinces, were now become more formidable than ever, and the neceſſity that Diocleſian was under to oppoſe them, induced him to take into partnerſhip with himſelf in the empire, Maximian, a brave general, but rather of a diſobliging temper. By the mutual conduct of theſe men, many of the barbarians were driven back to their native foreſts, but ſtill they were not ſubdued, for they only returned

turned in order to acquire new ſtrength, and invade the provinces with redoubled fury.

Maximian marched againſt the peaſants in Gaul, who had taken up arms under Amandus and Helianus, two adventurers, who aſpired at the empire, but they were defeated and ſlain. Confuſion took place in every part of the empire, for no ſooner was one pretender deſtroyed than another ſtarted up. In Egypt, Achilleos got himſelf proclaimed emperor, and Diocleſian marching againſt him, a moſt bloody battle enſued, but Achilleos was defeated, and the emperor ordered him to be devoured by lions; a puniſhment common in that barbarous age.

Much about the ſame time Maximian was obliged to march to Africa, where the legions had taken up arms againſt the government, and plundered the treaſury of all the money they could find. In conſequence of this combination among the legions, a bloody war enſued, but Maximian was at laſt victorious, though not without the loſs of many men. In Britain every thing went into a ſtate of confuſion, in conſequence of a free-booter named Carufius, who had taken up arms, and got himſelf proclaimed emperor by the army, who eſteemed him as one of the braveſt commanders in that age.

Conſtantius Chlorus was ſent into Britain to oppoſe this formidable adventurer, but he found him too well ſupported, ſo that he was obliged to enter into a treaty with him. At laſt, Carufius was ſlain by Alectus, one of his moſt intimate friends, and peace was in ſome meaſure reſtored to the Britains, but the attention of the emperor was called to meet the Perſians, who had taken up arms, and they were defeated with great ſlaughter, for how-

ever numerous their forces were, yet, the Roman diſcipline, even in thoſe degenerate times, always proved an over-match for them.

So far good ſucceſs attended the arms of Dioclesian and Maximian, but the Goths, Vandals, and many other northern nations remained ſtill unſubdued. Victories indeed were obtained over them, and many thouſands of them who had been made priſoners were ſent as ſlaves to cultivate the ſouthern provinces, but for all that their numbers ſeemed not to decreaſe. Every return of a new ſeaſon brought them in innumerable multitudes into the provinces, for they were under the neceſſity of looking out for new ha itations.

Dioclesian and Maximian, though men of great abilities, yet were too eaſily impoſed on by ſuch as were near their perſons, and therefore an edict was publiſhed, by which the perſecution againſt the Chriſtians was again revived, and as it was the laſt, ſo accordingly it was the ſevereſt that had ever taken place. The cruelties inflicted upon theſe innocent people even exceeds deſcription; the whole fury of the Pagans was let looſe upon them for no other reaſon but that they would not ſacrifice to idols, and unheard of tortures were invented in order to make them blaſpheme their God. But every thing proved unſucceſsful, for the Chriſtians, notwithſtanding their numerous and cruel ſufferings, continued to increaſe; ſo true is that antient ſaying, namely, "That perſecution is the life of religion." This ſeverity contributed much towards the deſtruction of the empire, for, while the Romans were putting the Chriſtians to death in the moſt horrid and cruel manner, the Goths and Vandals took freſh courage, and carried their arms into the midſt of the provinces.

In

In the midſt of theſe inteſtine diviſions, and while the empire was ſurrounded nd daily invaded by the barbarians, Diocleſian and Maximian, for reaſons that are not well aſcertained, reſigned their dignity, and went to live in a private manner.

Diocleſian, who ſeems to have been a man of a contemplative mind, ſpent the remainder of his days in tranquillity, and although he was often ſolicited to re-aſſume his former authority, yet he told his friends, that he was too well acquainted with the toils of government to leave his beloved retreat.

He was one of the moſt active emperors that Rome had ſeen for many years, and although a man of a ſevere unobliging temper, and unforgiving nature, yet the barbarity of the times rendered ſuch a conduct in ſome meaſure neceſſary.

Maximian lived ſome years afterwards, but being of a reſtleſs ungovernable diſpoſition, he was continually engaged in hatching new plots, and at laſt was put to death in Gaul, by order of Conſtantius, whoſe daughter he had endeavoured to perſuade to murder her father.

## LETTER LIV.

GALERIUS and Conſtantius Chlorus, whom Diocleſian and Maximian had adopted, ſucceeded them in the empire. A. D. 304. They were men of tempers totally oppoſite, Galerius being courageous, but at the ſame time, being a ſlave to vices of the moſt odious nature, while Conſtantius was remarkable for his humanity and univerſal benevolence.

It could not be ſuppoſed that men of tempers ſo totally oppoſite to each other could rule in one city or ſit on one throne. It was therefore agreed upon that the empire ſhould be di ided between them in the following manner:

Greece, with ſuch provinces in Aſia as did acknowledge the Roman yoke, were claimed by Galerius; while Conſtantius Chlorus, more warlike, and leſs afraid of the toils of a camp, made choice of Italy, Gaul, Spain, Britain, and ſuch provinces as had been conquered in Germany. The obligations the emperors were under in conſequence of the diſtreſſed ſtate of the empire, made it neceſſary that each ſhould chooſe one to aſſiſt him, and the perſons adopted were Maximin and Severus, ſo that the Roman empire, which had formerly groaned under one tyrant, now had four at the ſame time.

Conſtantius was a man of ſo much moderation and frugality, that many of thoſe who thought to have acquired fortunes by his liberality, upbraided him on account of poverty, which ſo little affected him, that he openly told them the nature of his circumſtances, upon which the people brought ſuch ſums to relieve his wants, that every one was ſurprized. This ſo much pleaſed the emperor, that turning to the ſoldiers, he told them in a ſmiling manner, that his ſubjects were the moſt proper perſons to be truſted with the keeping of his treaſure. He would not ſuffer the Chriſtians to be moleſted, but ordered that all former edicts againſt them ſhould be utterly cancelled. He had ſuch juſt and elevated notions of morality, that when ſome nominal Chriſtians whom he had been perſuaded to diſmiſs from offices in his houſhold offered to comply

ply with the eſtabliſhed religion, he told them, that he could not put any confidence in thoſe who were unfaithful to their own God.

The affairs of Britain, then in the moſt diſtracted ſtate, required his preſence in that province, and, accordingly, in the ſecond year of his reign, having left his ſon as an hoſtage with his colleague in the empire, he marched through Gaul, from whence he paſſed over to Britain, and fixed his reſidence at York, then the moſt flouriſhing city in the iſland.

While he reſided at York, the legions under his command obtained ſeveral victories over the Caledonians, who inhabited the moſt fertile and delightful part of Scotland then called Valentia, comprehending the whole tract of land between the walls of Severus and Julius Agricola. But the fatigues of war operating upon the delicacy of his conſtitution, he began to diſcover the ſymptoms of a conſumption, and therefore, in order to provide for the ſafety of his ſon, ſent for him from Rome, to attend him in his laſt moments.

When Conſtantine arrived, his father was ſtruggling under the decay of nature, but being altogether unimpaired in his intellectual faculties he recommended to his ſon to act with juſtice and moderation, and in a particular manner to extend his clemency to the Chriſtians. He declared him his ſucceſſor in the weſtern empire. He expired in the arms of his friends, leaving behind him the character of a wiſe legiſlator, an able experienced general, and a moſt merciful prince

The legions in Britain proclaimed young Conſtantine emperor of the Weſt; but no ſooner was the news thereof brought to Galerius, than, filled with

with the moſt ungovernable rage, he ſet up Severus in oppoſition to him.

Maxemenius, another pretender to the purple, ſtarted up at the ſame time, who, in order to ingratiate himſelf with the ſoldiers, gave them liberty to commit the moſt horrid acts of violence. Thus the empire was become the ſport of fortune, nor did the people know to whom they ought to be obedient. Severus marched to Rome, in order to oppoſe Maxemenius, but his legions not chuſing to fight any longer under his command, or rather wanting a new maſter, unanimouſly deſerted him, ſo that he laid violent hands on himſelf. Galerius was ſo much enraged at the death of Severus, that he marched towards Rome, but his ſoldiers having abandoned him, he returned by the ſame way he came, and in a fit of madneſs made choice of Licinius, a poor obſcure perſon, to be his partner in the empire. He did not long ſurvive this effort of his power, for he died of a diſtemper that mocked the ſkill of the moſt learned phyſicians, after he had languiſhed under it near a year.

He has been repreſented as a moſt cruel perſecutor of the Chriſtians, but ſome of thoſe accounts ſeem inconſiſtent with the reſt of his conduct. Certain it is, that a little while before his death, he revoked all the edicts that had been publiſhed againſt them, from whence we may infer, that if they were ever perſecuted by his order, he became ſenſible of their innocence at laſt.

A. D. 311. It was wiſhed by the people in general, that Conſtantine would aſſume the government of the whole empire, but he had ſeveral powerful rivals to contend with. Licinius and Maximin commanded in the eaſt, where each had

had been acknowledged as Cæſars by the army, and although enemies to each other, yet they were united againſt him. Maxemenius reſided in Rome, from whence he iſſued his orders with the moſt dictatorial authority, and as he was a violent ſtickler for the religion of the heathens, ſo many of the principal citizens continued to ſupport him.

Conſtantine, either diffident of his ſtrength in oppoſing ſuch formidable enemies, or content with the portion of the empire that fell to his ſhare, remained ſome time inactive, and ſeemed to take no notice of the conduct of the other competitors. Great part of his army was compoſed of Chriſtians, and as the people of that denomination were then become extremely numerous throughout the empire, it was reaſonable for him to take every opportunity of ingratiating himſelf with them. Many of them were credulous even to a proverb, and upon that credulity, the artful Conſtantine reſolved to raiſe himſelf to the imperial throne.

Euſebius, and after him ſome other eccleſiaſtical writers tell us, that while Conſtantine was one evening ſitting in his tent, conſidering of the moſt proper methods that could be uſed in order to make himſelf ſole emperor, the ſky became illuminated, and he ſaw the croſs with an inſcription upon it, intimating, that if he adhered to the Chriſtian religion he would become victorious. The heathen ſoldiers in Conſtantine's army laughed at the account of the apparition, but the Chriſtians, being more numerous, all adhered to him, and from that time he profeſſed their religion in public, although he ſtill refuſed to be initiated into their myſteries. This ſtep, taken by Conſtantine, ſhews him to have been a moſt conſummate

conſummate politician; for the Chriſtian ſoldiers, many of whom had ſerved under his father, were impatient of ſeeing him ſeated on the throne. Accordingly, he marched towards Rome, in order to meet Maxemenius, who, inſtead of uſing ſuch political methods, had recourſe to ſuperſtition, by conſulting the augurs and the books of the Sybils. At laſt, both armies met, and a moſt bloody battle enſued, in which Maxemenius was defeated and drowned, in attempting to croſs a bridge on the river Tiber.

As ſoon as victory declared in favour of Conſtantine, he took poſſeſſion of the city of Rome not as one who had been elected, but as one who had obtained the whole by conqueſt. He ordered, that the Chriſtians throughout the different provinces of the empire, ſhould be admitted to places of the greateſt truſt, honour, and profit, that all acts or edicts made againſt them by former emperors, ſhould be repealed, while every thing was done in order to diſcourage paganiſm. Indeed, the pagan religion had ſo long been eſteemed by the Roman citizens, that no ſooner did it ceaſe to enjoy the ſupport of power, than both it and the empire dwindled down to nothing.

In the mean time, while Maximin beheld with envy the ſucceſs that Conſtantine had obtained over Maxemenius, he marched from the Eaſt, but being oppoſed by Licinius, he was defeated, and obliged to ſhift for himſelf in the beſt manner that he could. Still hopeful of ſucceſs, he raiſed another army, but before he could do any thing to retrieve his loſt honour, he was taken off by an uncommon, though a natural diſorder, which the Chriſtians, whoſe inveterate enemy he was, called a judgment from Heaven upon him for his crimes.

The

The empire was now ſhared between Licinius and Conſtantine, but it was not to be ſuppoſed that two ſuch formidable rivals would live long on good terms; they were oppoſites to each other in their intereſts; for Conſtantine, for particular reaſons, did every thing to favour the Chriſtians, while Licinius, who ſeems to have been a profeſſed pagan, did not fail to perſecute ſuch as were protected by his colleague.

Thus, religion being called in as an auxiliary to ſupport political meaſures of ambition, both armies came to a general engagement. Conſtantine invoked Chriſt to aſſiſt him, while Licinius called upon the titular gods of Rome. At laſt victory declared in favour of Conſtantine, though only in a partial manner, for he was obliged to grant a truce to his competitor. The truce, however, was not of long continuance, for both parties once more took the field, and Licinius, being defeated, was obliged to ſeek ſhelter in Nicomedia. To that province he was purſued by Conſtantine, and although his life was promiſed him upon condition of ſurrendering, yet no ſooner had the emperor Conſtantine got him into his power, than he ordered him to be put to death, upon pretence that he was too great an enemy to the Chriſtians, and too formidable a rival to be ſuffered to live.

LETTER

## LETTER LV.

THE the firſt thing done by Conſtantine after his enemies were ſubdued was, to publiſh an edict, declaring Chriſtianity to be the religion of the empire, and at the ſame time, as far as was in his power, to aboliſh heatheniſm. The biſhops in the great cities were indulged with more power than was conſiſtent with their characters, by which church-power was founded, and, in time, eſtabliſhed. He iſſued orders for the deputies from the different orders among the Chriſtian clergy to meet in one aſſembly, and by their unanimous conſent, and the power of the emperor Conſtantine, Arius, with ſome others then called heretics, were baniſhed to the moſt remote provinces.

In this manner he went on for ſome time, hated by the pagans, but admired by the Chriſtians, while ſome crimes of the moſt odious nature ſtained the whole of his character. Fauſta, his wife, a woman of a looſe character, fell in love with his ſon Criſpus, the fruit of a former marriage, which ſo enraged the emperor, that he cauſed them both to be put to death, without ſo much as the form of a trial. Many other acts of cruelty are recorded to have been committed by this emperor, but the accounts of thoſe times are ſo confuſed, and ſo oppoſite to each other, that few of them deſerve any credit. The heathens repreſented him a devil, while the Chriſtians conſidered him as an angel.

In

In many other reſpects the character of Conſtantine is of a very dubious nature, but what he is moſt remarkable for is, that of contributing, in a manner, towards putting an end to the Roman empire. He had long been offended with the conduct of the Roman citizens, and therefore, that he might have a body of people immediately under his own direction, and ſubſervient to his wiſhes, he reſolved to transfer the ſeat of empire from Italy to Byzantium, near the Boſphorus; where the Euxine and the Mediterranean ſeas are joined together by a narrow iſthmus. The ſituation was as beautiful as could be imagined, and therefore he built that famous city, now called, in memory of him, Conſtantinople.

This was one of the moſt impolitic ſteps that could have been taken by the emperor, for the Goths and other barbarians had been ſo long accuſtomed to conſider Rome as the ſeat of empire, that no ſooner did they hear that the emperor had removed to Conſtantinople, than they poured in almoſt innumerable multitudes into Italy, deſtroying every thing before them. Some of theſe barbarians were, in conſequence of the vigilance of the emperor, driven back to their inacceſſible mountains; but their numbers increaſed ſo faſt, that the whole power of the empire was found inſufficient to oppoſe them. The greateſt part of the empire was divided between his two ſons, who acted as co-adjutors to him; but they were young men of the moſt abandoned characters. Conſtantine was now upwards of ſixty years of age, and the greateſt part of his life having been ſpent in camps and the field, he began to ſink under the decays of nature. He had eſtabliſhed Chriſtianity as the religion of the

the empire, from motives that cannot now be accounted for, and yet, for all that, ſo wavering was he in his own mind, that he would not ſuffer himſelf to be baptized, till he found death approaching. At laſt he paid the debt of nature, regretted by the Chriſtians, and abhorred by the heathens, in the ſixty-ſecond year of his age, after he had reigned thirty-two years in the moſt active manner.

With reſpect to his character, we are in a manner left in the dark concerning it; but ſo far as we are able to judge at this diſtance of time, it was not ſo amiable as repreſented by the Chriſtians, nor ſo odious as the accounts that we meet with of it in the writings of the heathens. Addicted to pleaſure, and a ſlave to his paſſions, Conſtantine paid very little regard to moral duties, any farther than the exerciſe of them could conduce towards promoting his own intereſt. It is true, he eſtabliſhed Chriſtianity as the religion of the empire, but then it muſt be remembered, that he did it in order to preſerve the good-will of the ſoldiers, moſt of whom were of that denomination. On the whole, he ſeems to have been a haughty ſovereign, an accompliſhed politician, an hypocritical profeſſor of religion, and one of a mean, ſelfiſh diſpoſition.

From the time of his death, the city of Rome, as the metropolis of the world, became in a manner an empty name. Many cauſes conduced towards promoting it, and ſome of thoſe will appear evident from a careful peruſal of the foregoing letters. Indeed, in order to ſtudy the nature of hiſtory, and the riſe and declenſion of any ſtate, we have no more to do than to conſider the ſimple narrative of facts in a philoſophical light.

The

The cauſes that enſure the glory of an empire, and extend the conqueſts of the ſovereign, are often too little attended to by thoſe who read hiſtory, and much leſs by the people who lived in the ages when the facts took place. We are apt to ſleep over things of the utmoſt importance, nor can any thing awake us, till the uſe of the means are loſt.

We are apt to blame thoſe who have lived in ages before us, for giving an unlimited power to tyrants, and although the accuſation may happen to be no more than partial, yet nothing is more common than thoſe who complain of their predeceſſors, to give more encouragement than ever was thought of before, and even encourage tyrants to go on, without the thoughts of ever being brought to juſtice.

We have already ſeen, that the Romans, from a poor, mean handful of robbers, who ſubſiſted by plundering their neighbours, acted upon ſuch principles of policy, that they became a powerful ſtate, and even ſubdued many of the nations around them. We have ſeen them riſe to the empire of the world in a gradual progreſſive manner, and we have beheld, with concern, their ſinking down to a ſtate of oblivion. Some of the cauſes have already been pointed out, but in order to refreſh your memory, I ſhall now preſent you with them in one point of view.

Firſt, the Romans were an unſettled people, for the notions of an equality operated ſo ſtrongly on their minds, that no ſooner was a perſon inveſted with the diſcharge of his duty as ſupreme magiſtrate, although only for a time, than the moſt trifling miſtake committed by him was conſtrued into

into a crime, and he generally ſuffered a violent death. They could not be brought to diveſt themſelves of vulgar prejudices; they had no notion of the neceſſity of ſubordination in every weſl-regulated ſociety, every citizen was looked upon as equal in power, and, in conſequence of that depraved notion, no proper reſpect was paid to thoſe inveſted with magiſterial authority.

Secondly, another cauſe of their unhappineſs was, their frequent change of magiſtrates, for they ſeldom conſidered the effects of inveſting a perſon with plenary powers, till they began to find that he had, in conſequence thereof, ſet himſelf above the laws. Thus Sylla and Caius Marius were, in effect, as great tyrants as ever exerciſed the regal authority, and yet the vices of the people ſeemed to countenance the conduct of theſe men. Both had been inveſted with plenary powers, at leaſt of a temporary nature, but no ſooner had they diſcharged their duty to the commonwealth, than they became objects of jealouſy, and were marked out for deſtruction.

The decemviri, the conſuls, the tribunes of the people, the curuli ædiles, with many other offices, became equally deteſtable to them, for no ſooner was an election made than it was repented of. But above all, the dictators were the moſt obnoxious to the people, although they were raiſed to power by their voluntary conſent.

This was a ſpring of tyranny that the moſt barbarous nations would not have ſubmitted to. Theſe men had a right to act in whatever manner they pleaſed, and even the ſenate were called to an account by them. Neither law nor equity could reſtrain them within proper bounds, while the people were ſlaves under the name of freemen.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, another cauſe why the Roman people were not in a ſettled condition aroſe from a principle that took place in the firſt formation of their republic, namely, the making a difference between the plebeians and the patricians.

This gave the ſenate a power inconſiſtent with natural reaſon, and a conteſt took place on every occaſion, that ſupplanted the intereſt of both. The ſenate looked upon themſelves as the guardians of the laws, and the people, who conſidered all their power as flowing from them, took every opportunity of oppoſing their decrees.

This occaſioned the ſetting up of two ſeparate intereſts in the ſame ſtate, and both were inveterate enemies to each other. Many of the ſenators endeavoured, by indirect practices, to ſet aſide the force of the Agrarian law, which the people looked upon as oppreſſive, becauſe it tended towards making ſome of the members of the commonwealth more rich and powerful than was conſiſtent with natural freedom. The diſputes that aroſe, in conſequence of the infringement of this law, created many inteſtine diviſions, and obliged the people, who had long ſtruggled for liberty, to become ſo much reduced to miſery, that they were glad, rather than ſuffer under ſo many domineering tyrants, to throw themſelves, without entering into any conditions, into the hands of arbitrary power.

Laſtly, the choice that the Roman people made of emperors was rather forced than free. Julius Cæſar, from a variety of concurring circumſtances, made himſelf emperor of Rome, when the people were too impotent, in conſequence of their inteſtine diviſions, to ſupport their own importance in a becoming manner. It is true he was endowed with

with all thoſe qualities that are neceſſary in a ſovereign, but that power with which he was inveſted, being of a precarious nature, and not confined to any reſtriction, and as his ſucceſſors enjoyed the ſame, many of whom were a diſgrace to human nature, ſo the dignity of the Roman people ſunk into contempt, and the greateſt empire in the world dwindled down to nothing.

Upon the whole, the loſs of virtue occaſioned the loſs of power, and this ought to remain as a ſtriking leſſon to all thoſe ſovereigns or commanders, who want to extend their conqueſts beyond proper bounds. The Romans were once ſovereigns of great part of the habitable world, and as they had acquired that power by induſtry, ſo they loſt it by ſloth, and at preſent their name is only known in hiſtory, which will tranſmit it to the lateſt ages of poſterity. Empires may riſe and fall, but truth will remain unſullied.

FINIS.